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with an interest
in disability

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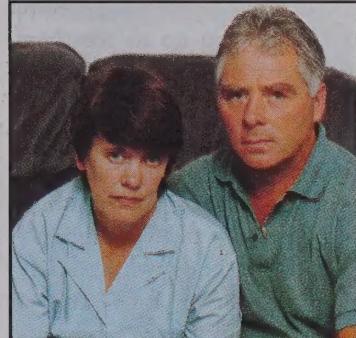
A local council has launched an action plan for the care of people with learning and behavioural difficulties following the death of a woman in respite care.

City of York Council has criticised North Yorkshire County Council for having inadequate guidelines and practices at Howe Hill Hostel in Acomb.

Zoe Fairley, 21, died there in September 1995 while being held down by care workers using a technique known as "prone restraint procedure".

She suffered "asphyxia due to compression of the trunk" after being held down for 50 minutes. The hostel was then run by the county council.

City of York Council took over the home in April this year and commissioned a



Angry: Zoe's parents Brian and Kathleen Fairley

YORK AND COUNTY PRESS

report into care for people such as Zoe, by an independent consultancy, the

National Development Team (NDT). Its report criticised the council's provisions.

Of the circumstances leading to Zoe's death, the NDT says: "This has all the hallmarks of a crisis waiting to happen." And it quotes one member of staff as saying: "It was a total mess."

York's action plan, launched in September, includes:

- a review of Howe Hill and its future role
- a redesign of respite care services
- a detailed audit of staff skills
- a revised programme of staff training.

North Yorkshire County Council has criticised the report and said it was not consulted.

A spokesman said: "While we concur with the main recommendations of the report, we are concerned that it contains some inaccuracies and ambiguities which could lead to serious misinterpretation."

But Roger Dixon the solicitor of Zoe's parents, Brian and Kathleen Fairley, said: "It makes chilling reading for anyone with an interest in this type of care."

Zoe's parents are angry that they have so far received only a summary of a report into their daughter's death from North Yorkshire. They are also upset at the time it has taken the authority to supply its report to the coroner.

As DN went to press a date had still not been set for the inquest.

Brian McGinnis, special advisor at Mencap, said the Government had issued guidance which usually worked well.

"Unfortunately you are still going to get people who are so challenging and staff who do not have the skills to deal with them."



Winter fashion gets easier with mail-order. Model Mark Beer, of the Louise Dyson modelling agency in Birmingham, shows off snug clothes. More ideas, pages 16-17.

GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

DAN gets tough in transport war

Nearly 180 disabled people bought traffic in Derby to a standstill for four hours last month in a protest over inaccessible public transport.

Wheelchair user Stella Ryan was among many protesters who handcuffed themselves to buses and had to be cut free by police.

The protest was part of a three-day campaign by Direct Action Network (DAN) in Derbyshire.

The group lobbied Trent Buses head office and some handcuffed themselves to vehicles, again, holding up traffic. The bus company has now agreed to meet DAN members to discuss providing low-floor buses.

More than 40 people also built a makeshift ramp at Buxton railway station to protest against inaccessible steps to the ticket office. Railtrack has promised to build a proper ramp.

Meanwhile, in Norwich, dis-

abled protesters handcuffed themselves to an easy access bus which was due to be inspected by Transport Secretary George Young at Norwich railway station.

Members of Norwich Access Group were angry that the new £1.5 million Eastern Counties Buses fleet does not have ramps for wheelchair users.

Sir George invited campaigner Bill Albert to meet transport officials in London.

DAN national organiser Alan Holdsworth said the group was stepping up its action as disabled people were still not getting what they wanted.

"This is not just about getting wheelchairs on buses, it's about segregation," he said.

"Transport firms are being dragged kicking and screaming to meet us, but this is a long-term campaign and we won't stop until we get equality."

DAN plans to target London next year.

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A taxing change

Disabled drivers are no longer able to claim back-dated car tax.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency used to give refunds dating back to the time when a driver first started claiming the higher mobility rate of the Disability Living Allowance.

However, it now says there are no longer delays in processing claims and will only give refunds for the months remaining on a driver's current tax disc.

Home takes shape

The Lin Berwick Trust is nearing its fund-raising target for a new holiday home for disabled people and their carers at East Harling, near Norfolk.

Lin Berwick (DN's telephone counsellor) has already raised £100,000 towards the £150,000 target. It is due to open next April and will be available to rent.

Tel: (01708) 477582

Pay-out reform

The Government is to claw back benefits claimed by people awaiting small compensation pay-outs.

Secretary of State for Social Security Peter Lilley announced plans in October aimed at saving the taxpayer more than £40 million a year.

People with claims of £2,500 or less will no longer be exempt from the compensation recovery scheme and will now have to pay back their benefits.

Day of celebration

Don't forget 3 December – the fourth European Day of Disabled People.

Throughout Europe hundreds of events will be held to raise awareness.

Shocking wait

A Suffolk man needing a hip operation was told he could not get an appointment until the next century.

His GP George Hopkinson was told that his patient could not be seen by a specialist at Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge for four years.

He would probably have to wait another two years for the operation.

Women take control

Disabled women swept the board in the election for honorary officers of BCODP last month.

Anne Rae has become the new chair, while Anne Pridmore becomes vice chair. Rachel Hurst becomes secretary and Jane Campbell is treasurer.

Milking the system

Hundreds of disabled children could be missing out on free milk because of the Government's lack of publicity about the benefit.

Children between five and 16 years old who are too disabled to attend school are entitled to seven pints of milk a week under the Department of Health's Welfare Food Scheme.

But the "hidden benefit" is not mentioned in any Disability Living Allowance leaflets and little reference is made to it in other Government literature.

Susan Plummer, from Norfolk, whose son Matthew was unable to attend school for more than a year after a road accident left him with serious mobility problems, saw the benefit mentioned in the Dis-



Tenacious: Susan Plummer

ability Rights Handbook.

But Susan found applying for the milk was no easy matter.

"It took me 23 long phone calls to eventually get the form and the current address to apply for the benefit," she said.

"No-one seemed to know about it. The freeline benefits number had no idea and my local social security office

didn't have any relevant forms."

Months after her initial enquiry Mrs Plummer eventually received the money for the milk her son should have had and was re-imbursed for all her phone calls.

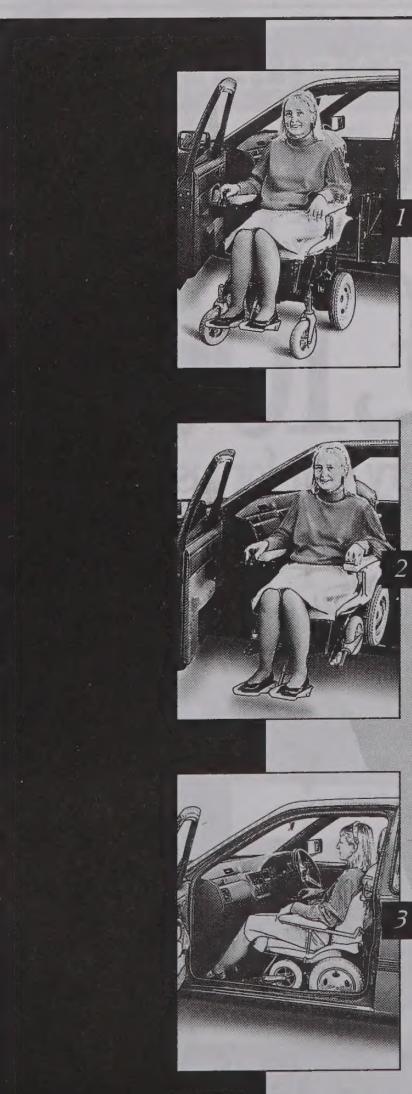
"Someone could be owed £1,000 – the cost of seven pints a week over 11 years," she added.

Under Secretary of State for the Department of Health Baroness Cumberlege admitted there was a lack of publicity about the benefit and has asked for it to be included in Social Security publicity "as soon as possible".

To apply for milk tokens an FW20 form is needed which should be available at local Department of Social Security offices.



Taxi! Brian Neckles shows Norma Major how he can get around London in an accessible black cab which has been sponsored by John Grooms Association for Disabled People. Mr Neckles lives at Dainesmead House in Edgware which is run by the charity. He presented Mrs Major – a vice-president of the association – with the bouquet of flowers too. John Grooms is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year and the taxi emblazoned with its name, will travel around the capital, highlighting the charity's role – enabling people with disabilities to maximise their independence.



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Charities get in on the Act

A consortium of five major disability charities is negotiating with agencies bidding to provide advice and information when the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) comes into effect.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, Scope, Mencap and Mind were negotiating with two groups as DN went to press.

The charities have talked with both the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux and Deloitte & Touche/National Consumer Council Services, which are both interested in making tenders to provide the service under the DDA.

Alan Thomas, parliamentary officer for the RNIB, said: "The people running the service will need expertise.

"We are doing nothing at all to compromise our support for full civil rights. You may not agree with legislation but you have to work with it while it exists."

The news has provoked concern about the position of these charities within Rights Now, the umbrella rights organisation.

Rachel Hurst secretary of the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) said: "It is very difficult for a service provider getting Government funding to be a powerful lobbying group."

Winter crisis looms in NHS

The health of disabled people needing non-emergency operations could suffer as hospitals brace themselves for a tough winter of cuts.

Most hospitals admit to overspending their budgets by up to millions of pounds and the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (NAHAT) has called for a three per cent rise in spending to meet the estimated £300 million shortfall in NHS spending.

NAHAT spokesman Barbara Connah said hospitals would have to concentrate on emergency admissions.

She said: "Disabled people will suffer like other patients."

Charity silenced

A helpline charity claims it has been run into the ground by BT.

The Afterwards charity – a counselling service for people who become suddenly disabled – says BT's inept organisation and service has ruined the charity's work, losing it staff and funding.

Manager Anna McKenize said: "BT made a catalogue of errors over the six months it took them to properly install six new phone lines for our expanding charity."

In an ironic twist, Ms McKen-

Neil Betteridge, head of projects and campaigns at the Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation, said: "Any delay is likely to be detrimental and cause extra stress and pain to disabled people. We are very concerned."

• Hillingdon Hospital in west London has closed its doors to emergency patients over 75 from half its local area in an attempt to survive a "crisis" in its service.

Hillingdon Hospital Trust said it had been hit by soaring demand and difficulty in discharging elderly patients.

The trust said it would lift the ban as soon as possible.



"Don't laugh – You'll look like a snowman when you've been waiting as long as they have!"

Tourism for more

Disability awareness in the tourism industry took a step forward last month when two new guides were published by the Tourism For All campaign, in association with the national tourist boards.

*Providing Service for All in Education** is for schools and colleges running tourism



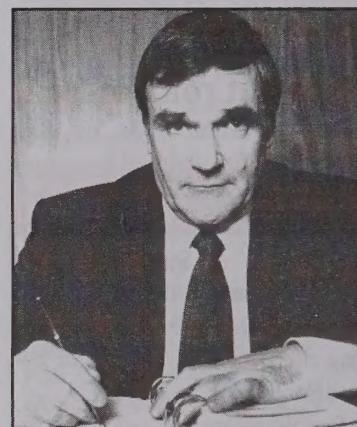
courses, and *Providing Service for All – a Guide for the Tourism Industry** will help industry workers respond better to disabled customers' needs.

Tourism for All and the tourist boards have now agreed symbols for the national accessible standard (see below), which should be seen around next spring.

A sensory standard for people with impaired sight or hearing has been drafted.

*£5 from the tourist boards

RNID spreads the word to New Zealand



British rep: Doug Alker

Doug Alker, chief executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, was the only British speaker at an international conference in Auckland, New Zealand last month.

He told more than 1,800 delegates at the Rehabilitation International Congress 1996 that most of society was willing to try and improve things, but people needed to be aware of deaf people's presence.

People needed to know the problems and had to be shown how to overcome them.

Deaf people wanted to participate in society. But "it is not enough to ask for equality of access, complain about lack of equality, or demand rights".

The theme of the conference was *Equality Through Participation for Disabled People*.

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In brief

First legal suicide

The first man in the world to end his life by legally sanctioned suicide has died in Darwin, Australia.

Ben Dent, 66, who had stomach cancer, died by lethal injection under the new Northern Territory Rights of the Terminally Ill Act.

Father's care back

South Cheshire Health Authority has agreed to retain the care package for Brian Parker at its present level, after threatening major cuts (DN August).

An independent assessment on Mr Parker, who has severe brain damage, said his needs had not changed.

Kent centre opens

Hi Kent – a charity which aims to raise awareness of the needs of deaf and hearing impaired people – has opened its new head office in Maidstone.

Its services include a display of equipment aids and a room equipped with facilities which replicate a home environment.

Tel and minicom: (01622) 691151

Expectant surprise

An Italian couple, who are both paralysed from the waist down, are expecting quintuplets.

Maria Concetta Ganci, of eastern Sicily, was artificially inseminated with the sperm of her husband Giovanni after she had received fertility treatment.

Welsh sport boost

The Welsh Sports Association for the Disabled, Welsh Sports Association for People with Learning Disabilities and the Athletics Association of Wales, have joined up to promote sport for disabled people in Wales.

The BT Athletics scheme ultimately aims to increase the number of Welsh athletes in the Sydney Paralympics.

Mental health help

Help for severely mentally ill people, including crisis support services and outreach schemes, are to be provided through £30 million of Government grants. Schemes will be chosen through the Mental Illness Specific Grant Target Fund.

Deafblind relaunch

The National Deafblind League has been relaunched as Deafblind UK.

Tel: (01733) 573511

Deaf actor David Bower, (left) of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* fame, helped launch a training and support group for deaf and hearing impaired students at the University of London. The new group is thought to be the first of its kind at a university and aims to help develop learning strategies, assertion skills and confidence for the university's 25 deaf students. He told them: "When things get really difficult, stick with it. If you do, you'll get through to the other side."



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As members of the public your clients want goods and services and the chance to use facilities like everyone else. From 2 December, the Disability Discrimination Act gives them these rights.

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Guide for Service Providers Guide for Employers

Please tick if you would prefer this information in:

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S/DN

Benefits agency set for shake-up

The entire benefits system in the UK could be privatised if a pilot scheme proves successful.

Three bidders look likely to run pilot partnership projects with Government offices around the country, to see if savings can be made.

If they work out, contracts could then be offered to private companies who would deliver and administer the 24 benefits available in the UK.

The Benefits Agency runs nearly 60 offices and employs 76,000 staff, but Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley hopes to simplify procedures and reduce administration costs.

A DSS spokesman said: "In 1998 we will invite the partnership companies to put forward proposals identifying elements

of our business where private sector involvement can demonstrate value for money."

Pauline Thompson of the Disablity Income Group said privatisation would mean another layer of bureaucracy.

"The service will probably become more remote and I am not convinced it will be better."

Meanwhile, the number of people claiming disability living allowance increased by 197,000 to 1.7 million by April 1995.

Take up of sickness benefit and invalidity benefit increased to 2.4 million by last April – an increase of 157,000 on the year before.

Dave Gibbs, research manager at the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living, and DN's benefits expert, said the Gov-

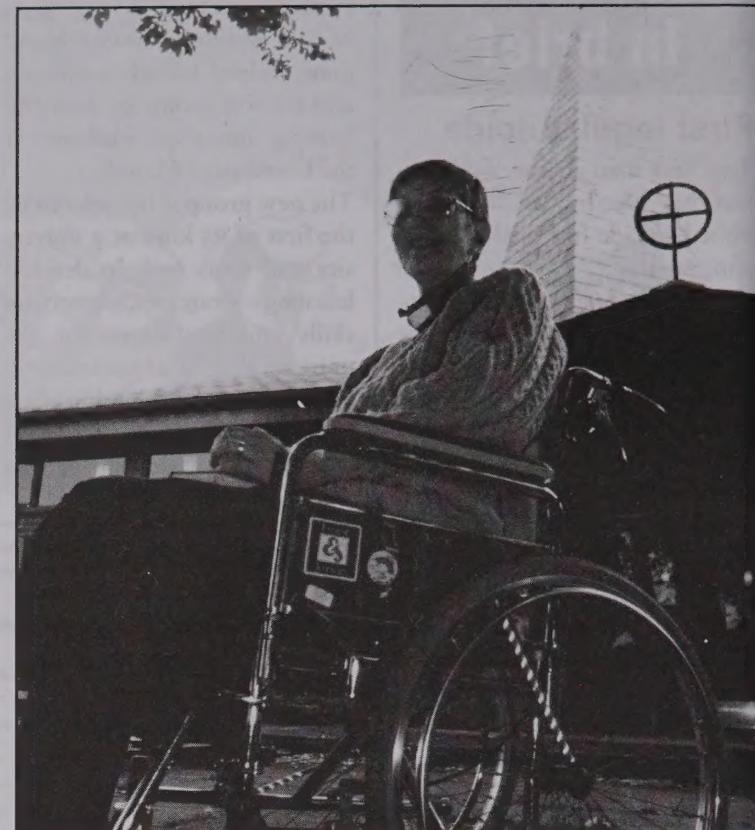
ernment had encouraged people on unemployment benefit to go "on the sick" in an effort to massage figures.

"These people become trapped as a statistic that is being misrepresented."

Mr Gibbs added that some people were only now beginning to claim benefit as they had previously believed that this was passive and negative.

- The Child Poverty Action Group fears that the new job-seekers allowance (JSA) will cause severe hardship for thousands of people by creating more benefit cuts.

It says 200,000 disabled people are predicted to fail incapacity tests and will have to apply for JSA, which raises concern about their welfare.



Holy appropriate: Congregations in Lancashire will get a lesson in attitudes towards disability when Frances Edwards, a non-stipendiary priest, takes up her new post. Rev Edwards, who has ME, is to become regional co-ordinator for Chad (Church Action on Disability). "I'm absolutely delighted," she said. "It puts our work higher on the Church's agenda which is about much more than making churches accessible. The right attitude means more to a person with a disability than a wheelchair ramp."

LANCASHIRE EVENING POST

Lesson in boosting school figures

A report into further education opportunities for people with learning disabilities has been welcomed as "the way forward" by Skill, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.

The report estimates that 130,000 students with a learning disability (only five per cent of the total) are in further education, and calls for an increase.

The report, *Inclusive Learning** by a committee set up by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), makes recommendations to improve quality of education.

"It will prove to be one of the most significant milestones in opportunities for disabled people in this decade," said Skill's director, Deborah Cooper.

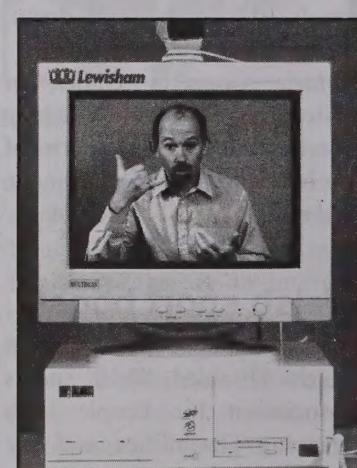
"It calls for the further education system as a whole to become inclusive without forgetting the particular requirements and strengths that individuals bring to the sector."

Two recommendations made by the committee are a staff training programme and inspections of how teaching matches learning requirements of students.

"We want to see effective learning for everybody in the future education system and we want to see colleges enrolling and supporting a much wider range of students than is currently the case," said Professor John Tomlinson, chairman of the committee.

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Chatting to council is better on screen



Lewisham social worker for deaf people, Michael Sadowski, (above) signs on teletalk – the council's new video conferencing network.

It is the first in the country to set up a system which will deliver services and information to the deaf community.

A deaf person can sit in front of a screen and camera and communicate with a staff member using similar equipment.

Document scanners and printers at both ends of the line make it possible for staff and residents to send documents back and forth to each other.

Council spokesman Scott Davidson said only one housing office had the new technology, but that they planned to introduce them all over the borough, even in shopping centres and libraries.

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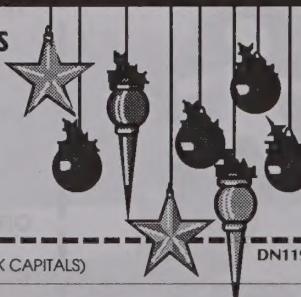
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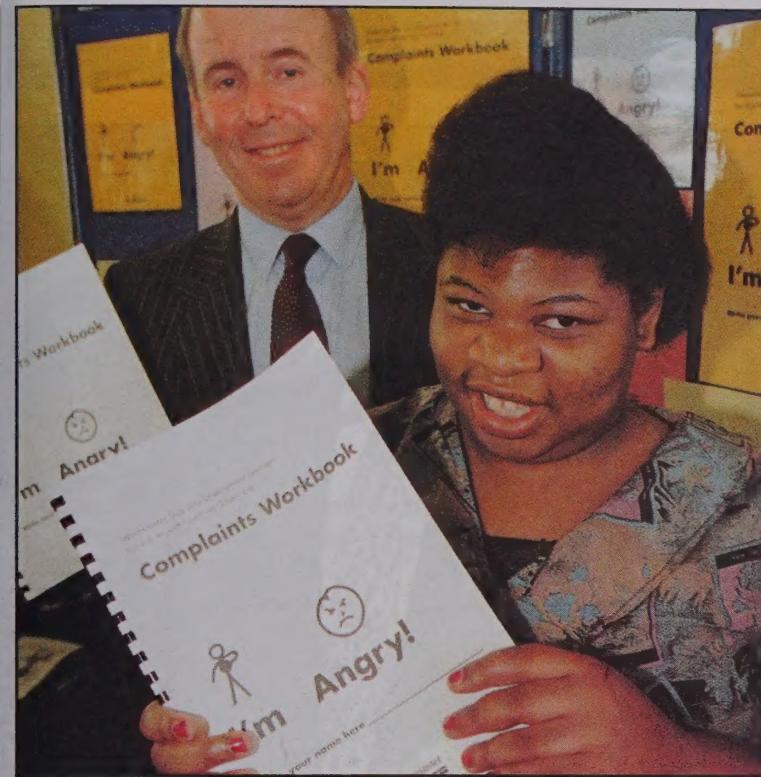
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By the book: People with learning disabilities will be able to voice their complaints by using a handbook launched by Westminster City Council. The Complaints Workbook uses a basic pictorial language devised for people who cannot read or write. Lizzie Francis helped design the book and is pictured with councillor Alex Segal, chairman of the social services committee.

WESTMINSTER COUNCIL

Room for improvement as housing crisis looms

Local authorities are predicting a funding crisis for grants to improve housing for disabled and elderly people.

One in three authorities expects problems in meeting demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), according to a new report by the Local Government Management Board.

The new Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act comes into force in December when grants of up to £20,000 will be paid out if improvements are needed. But authorities will have the power to defer payment by up to 12 months in exceptional circumstances.

In the last year, demands

nationally for grants increased by 11.9 per cent to 45,335. While the average shortfall for funds to provide the grants in each authority was £150,000.

Age Concern housing information and policy officer, Louise Russell, said: "Without an increase in funds there could be considerable delays. It could become the norm to defer payments by 12 months."

There are also concerns that disabled people who are homeless may be given unsuitable housing when the new Housing Act comes into force in January.

The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), says ten per cent of

homeless people are disabled, elderly or have a mental illness.

Such people in priority need will no longer have an automatic right to permanent council housing. Instead they will have to be given temporary accommodation before they can be put on the housing register or helped to find alternatives.

The Government has urged local authorities to keep a register of adapted housing, but many have not begun to.

"The only option is going to be temporary or private sector accommodation, and it is going to be difficult to find suitable properties," said Marie Pye, RADAR housing officer.

Access failure

Half a million disabled Londoners do not have full access to public transport, says a new report.

All Change 2000, published by the Greater London Association of Disabled People (GLAD), reveals that 95,000 people are unable to use buses, while 290,000 have extreme difficulty in using them. It adds that 155,000 people cannot use the London Underground and 110,000 people find rail services impossible.

Improvements since an earlier GLAD report ten years ago have been "piecemeal, tentative and very limited," it says, leaving seven per cent of the London population without the use of public transport.

One of the report's authors Anne Peck is calling for an elected body including disabled people to plan public transport in the capital in the future. She also wants mainstream door-to-door services.

War guilt

The Government has been accused of "negligence on a massive scale" for allowing troops in the Gulf war to be exposed to dangerous pesticides.

MPs have called for an investigation after it was found the Ministry of Defence allowed troops to use organophosphate (OP) insecticides, which they knew to be dangerous.

These are now accepted as an almost certain cause of Gulf war syndrome and the reason why 753 veterans have claimed compensation for illness.

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DN11/96

Happy hols

Janet Bonner (above) spent three days in September dodging falling rocks, eating French food and meeting giant rodents.

It was all part of a *DN* holiday prize to Disney, Paris organised by ATS Travel and supported by insurers Travelcare.

"My friend and I thoroughly enjoyed it," she said. "The rides were great fun and all the staff were extremely helpful."

And would she recommend Disney, Paris to other disabled people? "I would say an absolute, unqualified yes."

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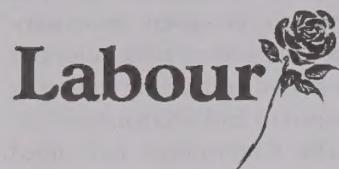
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As a general election looms on the horizon, *DN* goes to the party

Labour takes a voting gamble



October's Labour Party Conference in Blackpool backed the leadership's policy of keeping and improving the Disability Discrimination Act.

The conference endorsed a proposal moved by the National League for Blind and Disabled, and supported by the party's National Executive Committee, simply calling for "full and comprehensive" civil rights.

Many disabled party activists were unhappy about the vote, despite a pledge by party leader Tony Blair to "give the disabled the civil rights that the Tories have denied them".

The Labour Party Disabled Members' Group (LPDMG) had supported the repeal of the DDA and its replacement with a new civil rights law, but the proposal was beaten by 53 per cent to 47 per cent – the block votes of the GMB and Transport and General Workers'

Union proving crucial.

Wheelchair user and Labour prospective parliamentary candidate for Aberdeen South Anne Begg said: "I hope this will not be seen as a defeat – Labour is committed to civil rights."

Shadow Cabinet Minister for Disabled People Tom Clarke reaffirmed Labour's plans (announced a week earlier) for a Disability Rights Commission.



Committed: Anne Begg

He told *DN* this could investigate claims of discrimination and stressed that it would be given funding. It would also advise on improving laws, including the DDA.

During his conference speech he said: "It will not have to wait

to be asked. Those parts of the law which do not strengthen the position of disabled people will go. They will be amended, superseded or replaced."

He could not give any timetable for this.

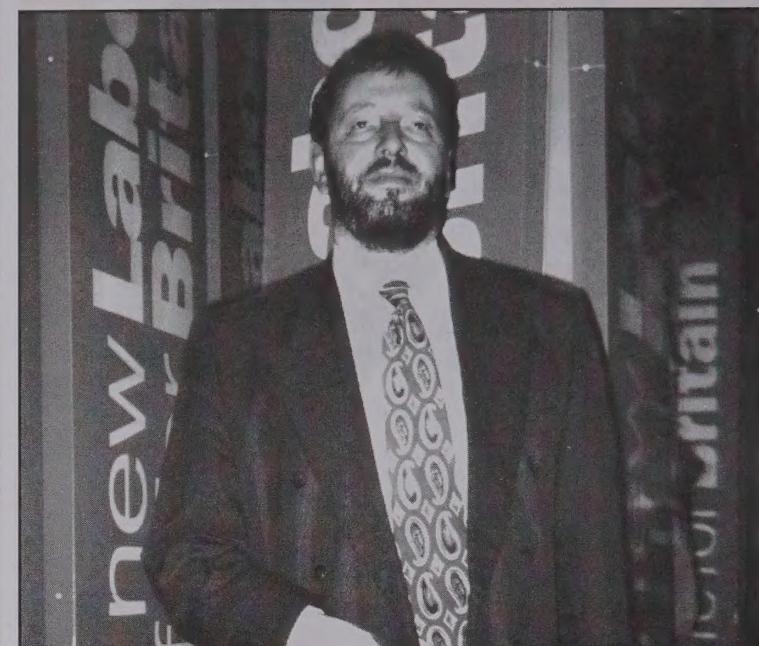
In an interview with *DN*, he said: "I am opposed to repealing the DDA. Given the huge competition there will be for legislation, I cannot be persuaded that we should squander the time."

There had been fears of adverse publicity if conference voted to repeal the act, he said.

Besides working closely with disabled people he promised to consult all interested groups, including the Employers' Forum on Disability and trade unions.

He said Labour would bring forward a review of the rule which exempts 96 per cent of firms employing 20 people or less. At present the review is set for 2001.

But LPDMG member Fiona Campbell felt that in not repealing the DDA the NEC was hedging its bets, by promising rights to disabled people while reassuring small businesses.



True faith: David Blunkett believes in genuine choice in education

Roger Berry MP was also concerned. "If we adopt a piecemeal approach it will be slow and will give our opponents every opportunity to block us."

On the issue of education, conference voted for policies which allowed opportunities for all. Labour is to publish a policy paper on special needs before an election.

Shadow Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett told *DN*: "Inclusive education is the way forward. But equality of opportunity is only achieved if genuine choice is available."

On employment, he said the job assistance scheme, Access to Work, would be improved.

And he conceded that small employers might need help in

meeting the requirements of an employment section which included them within the DDA.

"We need to work out the implications with the treasury team."

The conference voted for a Labour Government to set up a royal commission on the future funding of community care.

And more accommodation for disabled people should be provided with the profits from council house sales, it said.

On transport, the conference voted for an integrated system catering for disabled people.

In terms of access, the Winter Gardens had inadequate signing for visually impaired people. And wheelchair users struggled to scatter fringe meetings. Information on access was often lacking.

Lib Dems pledge



Realistic: Liz Lynne



"It's up to all political parties and organisations to make sure local authorities take on their responsibilities."

Ms Lynne said the newly-established National Disability Council was ineffective in dealing with the present "lottery of care" around the country.

"We don't want a council, we want a commission with teeth, similar to the system in the States where the human rights commission is working well."

But she acknowledged that authorities, including the local education authorities, needed more funding to help them.

She said the party was in favour of community care but that funding in this area was also lacking.

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conferences to see what each group would do for disabled people

Tories sitting tight until election

Minister for Disabled People Alistair Burt has called on disabled people to be patient.

At the Conservative Party Conference in Bournemouth in October he told *DN*: "We want to see the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) actually work. Its main job will be the ending of discrimination, changing society's perceptions."

Mr Burt said there would be a balance between the expectations of disabled people and

those delivering the services and employment.

"We will have to wait and see how the DDA works. It needs to be given a chance before people condemn it," he said.

At an Arthritis Care/Disability Alliance meeting on care in the community, he was told that the system was not working and that the level of service available depended on the individual local authority, not on a person's needs.

Mr Burt said he was aware of



Patient: Alistair Burt is urging people to sit tight

to keep the faith

"We have to look at whether a National Insurance-based system to pay for long term care is the right way forward. It would have to be government-run, but you would have to get agreement from all parties as it's a difficult problem."

Many of the fringe debates centred on long term care, after a policy motion was passed, "Long Term Care for Elderly People". This called for national standards for all long term care services and a national consensus.

Spokesman on community care Archy Kirkwood MP admitted the motion was "wishy-washy". He said he had looked into an insurance-based system rather than asking voters to pay more tax to fund their own care, but was reluctant to push it.

"I was too nervous to include approval of recent proposals suggesting a compulsory insurance scheme because of general election strategists," he said.

Health Spokesman Simon Hughes MP pledged more spending on the NHS to recruit and retain staff, in a bid to cut hospital waiting lists time to no more than six months.

There were few mentions of disability during the conference although a motion on education called for an expansion of opportunities for people with special needs and another on the political system called for Parliament to be more accessible for disabled people.

Access to the Brighton Conference Centre was good, although there were no tactile signs for visually impaired people.

Cleveland delegate and wheelchair user Joyce Benbow said the fringe venues were far from perfect. "There's only one toilet for disabled people in one of the venues, and I had to be pushed through the kitchen to get to one of the meetings," she said.

Delegate David Buxton, from London, who is deaf, said the

loop system in the conference hall was very useful.

"There is a signer at all the conference debates but no-one at most of the fringe meetings."

Pat Atherton, chair of the Liberal Democrat Disability Group, said fewer disabled people were coming to the conference each year, because of the cost.

"I wish everything we did as a party included an implication for disabled people, but we are working to help candidates understand the issues."



Understanding: Pat Atherton

erly managed without cracks.

"We must make sure that spectrum is there to meet those needs."

A consultation paper on improving the delivery of mental health services will be published this winter.

The debate on education and employment failed to mention the needs of those with disabilities, apart from a promise of "intensive literacy and numeracy help where needed".

The problems of community care and carers were frequently highlighted at the various fringe meetings.

During the Carers' Alliance



Fair: Caroline Salsbury

fringe Under Secretary for Health Simon Burns said carers, "the unsung members of society", must be given the proper recognition they deserved.

However, he made no promises on the future or the question of short-term breaks.

Disability was brought under the spotlight during the social security debate by Kingston

and Surbiton representative Caroline Salsbury, who has cerebral palsy.

Speaking to a packed conference hall, she congratulated the Government on the DDA which she said would give disabled people an equal chance of gaining a job on their own merits.

"It won't be easy but it will be fair," she told the conference.

She urged the Government to ensure all polling stations are accessible for the next general election – only 12 per cent were completely accessible in 1992.

During the National Heritage debate local government disability access officer Barbara Harrison commended the Government on the DDA and asked Virginia Bottomley to ensure all Millennium celebrations would be accessible.

The overall feeling among delegates was that the party had begun to take disabled people's rights seriously but that there was still a long way to go.

"We fought for the DDA and now things can begin to improve," said Peter Smith, delegate for Rugby and Kenilworth.

Access to the conference venue was acceptable although ramps were distinctly makeshift.

One wheelchair accessible toilet was "totally unsuitable", as Angela Drane of Scope discovered when she went through one door only to be faced with an occupied toilet and no way to turn around and get out.

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New drug slows decline

A new drug gives people with Parkinson's Disease the chance to delay the side-effects caused by its most common treatment.

Parkinson's affects 100,000 people in the UK, causing degeneration of the brain and reducing their ability to move. In advanced cases people with the condition can seize up.

The most widely used drug, levodopa, restores movement but in the long-term causes side-effects, such as uncontrolled body movement or unpredictable periods of immobility.

An international study into the effects of the new drug, ropinirole, in the early stages of the condition found that it reduced symptoms and delayed the need to use levodopa, according to the drug company SmithKline Beecham.

In September the company launched the drug in the United Kingdom, under the brand name Requip.

A spokesperson for the Parkinson's Disease Association of the UK said: "We will look forward to seeing how people progress with it."



Drug hope: People with Parkinson's may delay drug side-effects

SAM TANNER

"We welcome any drug that can help improve the quality of life of people with Parkinson's."

Fishy find

Oils found in fish could help in the treatment of schizophrenia, say researchers.

They now think that schizophrenia may be related to faulty membranes which affect the way chemical messengers in the brain behave.

Fatty acids similar to those found in fish such as herring and mackerel may supplement these membranes.

At present one per cent of the population is thought to have some form of schizophrenia says Scotia Pharmaceuticals, the company supporting the research.

But Dr Iain Glen of the Highland Psychiatric Research Group, who is collaborating in the project, warned: "This is still at an early stage of development."

Dr Glen is devising a skin test which may help to determine who would benefit from the treatment.

Aids gene discovery

American scientists think they have found the gene mutation which makes some people resistant to HIV and delays the onset of Aids.

The virus invades immune cells in order to reproduce. Scientists discovered the receptor, which lets it in, earlier this year.

A study of 1,900 high risk volunteers, carried out by the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, found that 10 per cent of caucasians carried a mutant form of the gene controlling this receptor, while two per cent of African-Americans carried it.

Doctors told: pay attention

Professionals should take care before diagnosing children as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

In a new report, experts from the British Psychological Society warn that descriptions of the condition are still evolving and that those dealing with such children should investigate all other possibilities in case the wrong diagnosis is given.

At the moment the condition is thought to cause children to be impulsive, overactive and inattentive.

The report also recognises concerns in the USA where the Drug Enforcement Administration has urged caution in prescribing psycho-stimulant drugs. "Medication is seen as a palliative but not sufficient on its own," say the researchers.

Growing smart

Scientists have discovered the gene which may have caused painter Toulouse Lautrec's growth impairment.

Researchers from Harvard Medical School and Mount Sinai School of Medicine have been looking into the condition pycnodynossostosis and say they have found the genetic cause which leads to distorted bones.

As the gene is vital for bone growth, research may point to treatments for conditions such as osteo-arthritis and osteoporosis.

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LEISURE SERVICES



Pino rights the songs

Disabled performer and songwriter Pino Frumiento talks to Helen Gregory about his life, loves and the pressures of stardom

"Every night when I was young I used to dream of being a star – and now my dream has come true."

Few people can make this claim, but for Pino Frumiento, his work with a London-based theatre company for performers with learning disabilities means his dreams of being an actor have been realised – against the odds.

Pino, 34, who lives with his parents in London, is one of the original members of the group Heart 'n Soul, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

He was attending a day centre when the company director Mark Williams approached him. At first staff were sure he could not manage to take part.

"The people who ran the day centre said I couldn't do it – that I wasn't capable of it. But when Mark came to see us again, I went along to some music classes and enjoyed it. It all took off from there."

Pino mainly contributes songs to the performances, which he creates by singing the tune to someone, who writes it down for him.

"I love people and I like to express myself through love songs," he says. Like other cast members, Pino also comes up with ideas for performances.

"It's getting harder to think of new ideas though, and I do have problems remembering my lines, but I really enjoy it."

The group meets every week and rehearses regularly in the run-up to performances. Pino has been on tour in the UK and Europe.

"I still get nervous but I love it when all the tickets are sold out and the theatre is full."

Audiences are getting bigger, but he admits the group is not widely known, which limits contact between the public and people with learning disabilities.

"Audiences are beginning to understand what we're doing. But outside the theatre, some people still ignore us. I don't think their attitudes have really changed much over the years."

Pino is very aware of others' misconceptions and ignorance which is one of the reasons he takes part in the plays.

He is so concerned about altering people's perception about disabilities that he is an active member of Lewisham Voice – an off-shoot of the



Music man: Pino writes and performs his own songs LEON MORRIS

People First – a disabled people's rights organisation. There he helps produce a newsletter and information displays.

"People with learning difficulties should be involved in the community – we're all the same – we're human

beings, not animals."

Pino is only too aware of some people's hurtful behaviour towards him, and although usually cheerful, his smile fades as he recalls some of the hurtful remarks.

"Some of them ask me for money, but I don't give it to

them. Some of them are scared of me. But they're the ones with a problem."

Pino acknowledges that as attitudes slowly change, some of his friends are finding work as cleaners and shopworkers, which he sees as a positive step.

Pino's own experience of shop work was brief but dramatic. Six years ago he appeared in a tv advert for Fuji camera film.

He was shown working in a supermarket where customers stared at him and avoided him because of his appearance. A snapshot of him smiling at the end was supposed to demonstrate photography's power to overcome prejudice.

Complaints followed and Mencap demanded withdrawal of the advert: members were angered at the way the firm seemed to be offering the photographic equivalent of cosmetic surgery. They thought it portrayed learning disability as something which would vanish when treated with a wonder product.

But Pino does not agree. He enjoyed the experience and being recognised in the street.

"People said I shouldn't have done it, but I thought that was a bloody cheek. We were raising awareness."

Pino believes his difficulty in getting a job stemmed from an inadequate education. He went to a special school, but says he

was unhappy there because he wasn't academically stretched.

"I would have rather gone to a mainstream school but my mum wasn't given the choice."

"I think it's much better that disabled children nowadays get more chance to go to a normal school. They learn more."

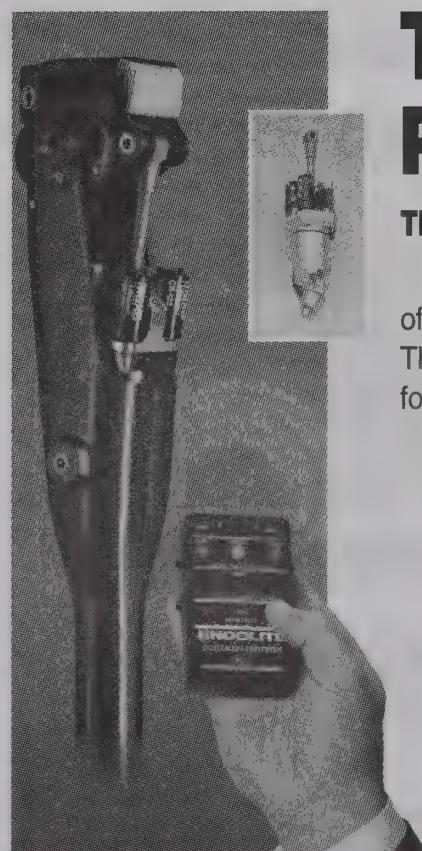
"People with learning difficulties should be involved in the community – we're all the same – we're human beings, not animals."

Pino is happy to stay with the company, and his ambition now is to settle down with his girlfriend, who also has learning disabilities. She has her own flat, and although the couple are keen to marry, he realises there could be problems.

She has experienced ridicule and insults from neighbours which worry him.

"They are awful to her, and although I want to live with her, I don't want that to happen to us. I'm not sure what we'll do."

See page 19 for more details of Heart 'n Soul's tenth birthday and international festival.



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ENDOLITE

Distinguishing the good from the mumbo jumbo

I have a great deal of sympathy for Ian Mackintosh when he calls for studies to separate out therapies that work (DN June). But it is not as simple as it seems.

Therapy techniques have usually originated with practitioners who develop a technique and then argue that in their clinical judgement it is effective – an assertion not usually tested.

With therapies we have a unique situation in which everyone (the therapist, child or parents) collude to support one another in believing that therapy succeeds. No one wants to believe they are wasting their time.

It is common for the more idiosyncratic therapies to encourage superstitious belief by prescribing that an activity must be completed at a particular time of day, in a particular way, with (or without) particular equipment. This may convey the impression that the therapy has a sound theoretical basis, but often there is no evidence that such rules really make a difference.

Of course, most people do improve in the course of therapy, but this may be due to factors like general maturing (in children) or general recovery of function (in adults).

A therapy can only be said to "work" if children make signifi-

Ian Mackintosh called for scientific studies to evaluate which therapies work. Nigel Foreman points out the snags

cantly better or faster progress after receiving that therapy than if they were left untreated (or received a "conventional" alternative).

For one child this can never be tested, because the child can only be assessed in one of the comparison groups at a time.

The best that can be done is to take two groups of children, having the same "match" for sex, age, condition, experience, abilities, and give one group the experimental therapy. After, say, two years, the two groups are compared for their degree of improvement, such as walking more competently, speaking better. This is the kind of evaluation Ian Mackintosh seems to be calling for.

When this has been tried, the studies have generally not confirmed therapists' optimism. For example, stroke patients given speech therapy made no more progress than those left on waiting lists for the same time;

Bobath physiotherapy appears not to improve upon "tender loving care", and a comparison of Conductive Education (CE) with regular physiotherapy in 1993 found no difference in progress, though CE gave more parental satisfaction.

Even so, it is rare that studies like these go uncriticised. "The therapy was not given properly", "the therapists were not fully trained", etc. (Don't be misled by therapists who argue that "the benefits are there but are too subtle to be measured". If they are detectable by therapists, they are measurable!)

Probably more studies would not influence therapists or convince parents – but they would cost a lot of money.

We could perhaps require all therapists to contribute information to a nation-wide database that records people's conditions, types (or combinations) of therapy, progress rating or landmarks, plus demographic data.

It would involve extra record keeping by staff, which they would not welcome, but over a period of time, using complex statistics, we might be able to make useful comparisons about how effective therapies are.

Dr Nigel Foreman is a psychologist at the University of Leicester.



Yvette and Matthew Sanson

Bringing up a child with autism

Yvette Sanson writes: It was with great disappointment that I read my parent's voice article (DN August).

I would never say, as you had it in the headline, "I have two autistic sons - but we don't have rigid routines".

The body of the article quite clearly says that our elder son, Jake, *was* autistic. We do not regard him as autistic now. Six years after he was deemed by everyone else, doctors, educational psychologists, teachers and us to be recovered from autism, DN has seen fit to call Jake autistic again.

I was also upset at the introductory paragraph: "Yvette Sanson's views on bringing up children are unconventional..." Had it said my approach to autism is unconventional, or my approach to t-shirts with slogans is unconventional, I would have gladly agreed. You know we believe in discipline.

Is that unconventional? I said we had strong opinions, but some of them have to do with not abandoning traditional values in the face of disability rather than adopting unconventional ones.

Paula Aitkin of Northshields writes: I wonder if Yvette Sanson has tried Evening Primrose Oil (EPO).

My son Colin who is nine-and-a-half, is autistic and the behaviour problems were getting really bad.

I had been giving him 1,000mg a day of EPO (in his milk), which worked for a time. But after reading through the information again, I realised it should have been more. When I increased the dosage to 3,000mg a day the results were amazing.

I have been getting lots of comments from school about Colin's increased eye contact, calmness and general happiness and co-operation.

I gave the carer of a 13-year-old boy with autism the information and she has been giving him 1,500mg a day, and the family and school can't believe the difference.

'He's a spastic – he'll never walk'

Shaun Green writes: As a person with cp, I want to express my sympathy for Mr & Mrs Bushnell's experience (DN July).

When I was diagnosed nearly 30 years ago, my parents were told by a professor: "He won't be able to do anything for himself, go to the toilet, dress himself, feed himself. Basically, he will be a virtual cabbage."

Thankfully, my parents chose not to accept this bigoted view. Today I live a fully independent and busy life. I am fully ambulant. I have my own flat, completed a three year youth and community work course, and am chairman of the Doncaster & District Association for the Welfare of the Disabled.

So, parents, don't take the words of a doctor too seriously.. they do sometimes get it wrong.

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Are you safe as houses?

In the second of our series on playing safe, *DN* explains how you can beat the burglars

A house is burgled every minute. More than 630,900 domestic burglaries were reported to the police in England and Wales during the last year, and figures are increasing.

But everyone should have a right to feel secure in their own home and there are steps you can take to ensure this.

No-one knows how many disabled people have break-ins, but they and elderly people are increasingly falling prey to conmen who trick their way into homes.

A survey by Hammersmith and Fulham Council in 1993 discovered that 17 per cent of disabled people had received bogus callers, compared with 10 per cent of the general population.

Conmen claiming to be from the council, the gas board or other services trick their way into homes to steal cash and valuables. In London there were 4,316 cases between July 1995 and July 1996.

"A large percentage of these bogus calls are on elderly and disabled people," says Diana Lamplugh, from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust for personal safety.

"One man with learning difficulties told me his council tax man came every week to collect his money, but it was discovered that this person, who seemed genuine, was

blatantly stealing from him. It's a big problem."

But there are rules you can follow to keep conmen out.

Always ask for proof of identity, which should include a photograph of the holder and name of the organisation.

If you're on the phone, call the organisation concerned or the police. Don't be afraid to shut the door if you are suspicious.

Many organisations make appointments before they visit and run password schemes. These are useful for visually impaired people who cannot easily check ID cards.

Spyholes can be custom-fitted to doors. They should be at eye-level so that someone in a wheelchair can see who is outside. Use a chain when opening the door to be safer.

Yale Security Products produce a metal door bar which limits opening, tel: (01902) 366911.

Intercom systems are always a help and those with visual display screens are especially useful for the deaf. Tunstall Telecom produces a range of alarms and home monitoring equipment, tel: (01977) 661234.

But how can you stop people getting in when you're out? Good locks on solid doors and windows are an effective deterrent. A crime prevention officer at your local police



Break-in: Precautions now save loss later

HELP THE AGED

station will be able to advise you on which locks suit your needs, and where to buy them.

Two locks, an automatic dead-latch cylinder lock and a mortice deadlock, which conform to the British Standard BS 3621, are recommended for doors. Don't forget to secure the back door – where 64 per cent of burglars gain access.

Burglar alarms are also a valuable investment. There's a wide range on the market. Some can be connected to vibrating pillows or pagers for deaf people, and there are alarms with flashing lights.

Sound Advantages produces vibrating attachments to alarms. Contact them through the RNID on 0171-296 8134.

Watch out

Police are warning people to be on the look-out for crooks posing as engineers for Channel 5.

The new channel goes on air next year, and millions of homes will need to have their video recorders and satellite and cable decoders retuned.

Each householder will receive a security checklist card and a unique security number before the engineer calls. He or she will quote the number when they call to do the work and will have clearly branded clothes and identity cards.

No equipment will be taken. If in doubt call the hotline number on the checklist card.

Feel secure for free

Thousands of homes around the country will be fitted with free security devices thanks to a new scheme run by Help The Aged.

Funded by Littlewood Lotteries, the £3.5 million HandyVan project aims to help elderly people feel safer at home.

Specially recruited fitters will assess an individual's needs and fit locks, alarms and spyholes. The scheme currently covers 11 areas throughout the UK but is set to expand.

Police, firefighters, social services departments and voluntary organisations will

refer elderly people who are regarded as being "in need" to the scheme. People can also contact Help the Aged themselves.

Wheelchair-user Vernon Peake, 67, who has had locks put on the doors and windows of his Southport home, welcomed the project.

"It's such a good idea. I feel much safer at home now."

"I would not have been able to afford to get this done myself. I'm very grateful to Help the Aged."

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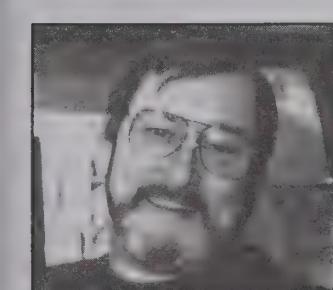
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Assertive: Barry Paterson

Barry Paterson was recovering in bed after a car crash when a teenage thief broke into his home.

Barry, 57, from West Croydon, heard noises coming from his bathroom one morning.

"Suddenly this lad poked his head round the bedroom door," said Barry, who has cerebral ataxia.

"He was so cheeky he said he was checking to see if I'd got my paper."

"I couldn't get up so I began shouting and threw my mobile phone at him. It was nerve-

Letters to the Editor



Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ
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Frightened off education

I read with great interest the debate "Which School is Best?" (DN September).

I believe conditions in special schools and mainstream state schools have improved significantly since I was a pupil at a residential special school in Newcastle in the mid and late 1960s. But when I was at school, from 11 to 16, because of the as yet unnamed problem of dyspraxia, my own weaknesses were often emphasised and potential nipped in the bud.

Reading books was thought of by the school as a strange peculiarity. Basic skills and competitive sport were the main things taught. Pupils were taught to have confidence in the staff and the

professionals who dealt with them, rather than in their own ability.

My literacy, numeracy and general knowledge deteriorated, even though sending me away was justified on the grounds that it was for the good of my education.

I left school in 1969 and it was 1987; some 18 years later, before I would dare enter a classroom again.

I write this letter because I believe that pupils of my era could still have educational, employment and mental health problems as a result of mismanagement — and they have never been adequately compensated.

Peter Brown
Middlesbrough, Cleveland

was that the gentleman in the commercial was also called David.

I hope we do not have the same commercial on our TV sets again this Christmas. It is an insult to my son and every other disabled person.

Valerie Hewitt
Hednesford, Staffs

Drink/drive poster

I have a 13-year-old son with cerebral palsy who we have to give drinks to, etc. He is a very bright, intelligent boy who enjoys life. He did get very upset about the TV commercial. What was even more upsetting



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Children on the move disadvantaged

I read with interest and a great deal of sympathy the problems encountered by the parents of four-year-old Giles Penman in getting treatment for him when they moved house (DN August).

For around 2,000 parents who serve in the armed forces, and have children with special needs, this problem is all too familiar as they move house every two years.

Children who may move ten or 12 times are permanently disadvantaged as they go through the whole of their

formative years changing schools, medical advisors and having to hand back equipment.

Each move places them firmly on the bottom of waiting lists for respite care, resource allocation and places in appropriate special schools.

Furthermore, each move generates a new cycle of the educational statementing process and it is not unusual for some local education authorities (LEAs) to only produce a statement in the last six months of a child's stay.



High jinks: Dave Langley gives Fran Rowland a go in Sharechair

Memorable day

I am secretary of the Stow Disability Association and have just read your article on the Sharechair (DN September).

I went with four disabled people and their carers to the Mobility Show in June and met Mike Harper and Dave Langley.

My wife being rather more

forward than most and having not been on a motorcycle for 35 years asked Mike if she could have a ride in the Sharechair. Mike agreed and to her delight she was driven round the test track. A memorable day.

Brian Rowland
Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos

Next month: Marigold Hope

The only light at the end of the tunnel is the increasing number of LEAs who are prepared to fund residential schooling; however, this does split up families. Currently the only disability organisation showing any interest in these children is the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA).

Can we now expect the large disability organisations to campaign to rectify this problem? Gordon Diffey
Bicester, Oxfordshire

Right of access?

The Digital Broadcasting Bill giving 5 per cent signed access to TV in ten years, raised a vital issue of deaf/disabled access: when is access not a right?

Less than 2 per cent of deaf/hearing impaired people watch signed TV now. Illiterate deaf people cannot use TV sign-language; literate deaf people can use the existing 50 per cent titled access. Why have 5 per cent in ten years when by then titles will have given us 75 per cent?

Mervyn James, Bishton, Gwent

Reader survey

Thank you to 1,300 readers of DN who have so far replied to the survey, giving frank views and lots of suggestions, and to those who also came to our focus meetings. We shall have some results to share with you next month — *Editor*.

DN's diary

A question of priorities
Gloucestershire social services is fighting off a court decision that says it cannot take its finances into account when meeting care needs, sent a youngster, charged with assault and awaiting trial, on a canal trip. In 1993 another young offender received an 88-day trip to Africa, costing £7,000.

It was cheaper to use a boat to prevent the 13-year-old from absconding, said Gloucester. What do DN readers think?

Red faced Europe

Disability rights campaigner Rachel Hurst, chair of Disabled People's International, Europe Region, has been nominated for UK Woman of Europe. She will know on 21 November — if she can get there. Rachel and electric wheelchair may have to be carried up steps into the European Commission's London Office. "They can take a running jump. I'm not going to be carried up one step," said Rachel.

Help to Hand

Second edition
By Pauline Hamblin

Help to Hand is a comprehensive directory listing a wealth of help available from voluntary and charitable organisations, self-help groups, professional bodies, commercial organisations, government departments and others who can help with a wide range of health-related conditions. *Help to Hand*:

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Hat trick (above): Mark wears a polarfleece cap with ear flaps for when it's really cold (polyester, £12, Racing Green, tel: 0113-238 2444) and a red sweatshirt (cotton, £19.99, Next, tel: (0345) 100500).

Picnic in the park (right): Chinezi looks cosy in this cowl neck sweater (lamb's wool/angora/nylon/polyamide, £39.99, Next) scarf (acrylic/polyester/viscose, £19.99, Next) and fake fur hat (acrylic/cotton, £12.99, Next). Barry keeps out the cold with green jeans (cotton, £19.99, Freemans, tel: (0345) 900100), twill shirt (cotton, £44.99, Freemans) tangerine v-neck sweater (cotton, £24.99, Next), fleecy jacket (polyester, £39.99, Next) and hat (wool, rayon, £15, Racing Green).

A whole new wardrobe is only a phone call away, finds Hayley Kerr

DN asked three models to try out the latest mail-order winter warmers.

Opportunities, a charity which helps people with disabilities to find employment, put us in touch with Chinezi Oduah.

Chinezi, a double amputee, especially liked the long comfy jumpers she tried on, like the ivory cowl-neck sweater.

She didn't like the trousers — the fabric was too clingy. Although "not a hat person" herself, she took a liking to the grey bowler from Next.

Barry Hayward took time off from Arthritis Care, where he works as a training manager, running residential training courses which aim to help people with arthritis increase their work prospects.

Barry has arthritis himself, and his main clothes gripe is

Cold com

that trousers are always too long.

While he really liked the leather jacket, he found it very heavy on his shoulders. But the red fleecy jacket was "really nice because it's warm and light and zips up easily".

Mark Beer, a wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, has been acting professionally for ten years. His TV roles include starring as Simon Redwood in the BBC drama *Specials* — the first BBC part to be played by a disabled actor.

Mark enjoyed doing the fashion shoot: "It is good and really unique to have the opportunity to use disabled models."

He found most of the clothes comfortable and especially liked the NX red sweatshirt. But he found the silver padded jacket too bulky to wear in a wheelchair.



GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

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Jacqueline Webb & Co



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- if you work as a residential carer and your salary is not paid by a social service department

We would like you to help us with a research project to identify:

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- levels of care residential carers are expected to give
- the nationwide variations of pay for residential carers

If you would be prepared to assist us with this project by completing a short questionnaire, please contact:

Christine Mitchell
Jacqueline Webb & Co
Beckett House, 4 Bridge Street, Salisbury SP1 2LX
Tel: 01722 329156

Any information given would, of course, be strictly confidential and the results of the survey would be freely available to you.

Fort for winter



Winter weekends (left): Barry's snug as a bug in a rug in this black ribbed sweater (cotton, £59.99, Freemans), chinos (cotton, £19.99, Freemans), leather jacket (lining acetate, padding polyester, £200, Next) and sheepskin aviator hat with pull down earflaps (sheepskin, £49, Racing Green). Chinezi looks striking in this bright red zip coat (wool/nylon, £69.99, Next) and jersey trousers (viscose/acrylic, £29.99, Next).

Warm as toast (right): Chinezi loved this leather coat (polyester lining, £270.00, Next) and cream angora sweater (angora/nylon/lycra, £39.99, Next). Scarf as before.

Silver style (right): Mark keeps warm and stays cool in this metallic bomber jacket (nylon shell and lining filled with duck down, £69.99, Next). Red sweatshirt as before.

Comfy and casual (far right): Barry goes for comfort with this Aran sweater (wool, £39.99, Freemans) and padded moleskin jacket (cotton, £54.99, Next). Chinos as before.



Win a winter coat
We've got two to give away from leading specialist clothing manufacturer, **Rolli Moden**. See page 31 for details.

Inset flyer (below): Mark wears a red flying jacket with detachable black fur collar (polyamide, £34.99, Freemans).



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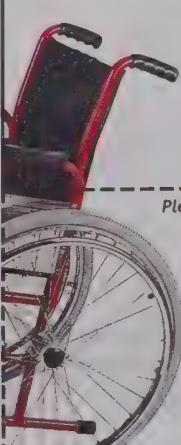
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Shop around and save

Get to know the VAT system and you can save pounds when buying equipment, says Lorraine Davidson

Everyone wants to make their lives comfortable, but disabled people usually have to spend a lot more on equipment to get the same result.

Apart from shopping around, a disabled person can save hundreds of pounds by simply using the present tax laws.

When a company's sales reach £47,000 over a year's trading it has to register for Value Added Tax (VAT) and add 17.5 per cent to the price of its goods. (A VAT-registered company would normally add £87.50 VAT to a selling price of £500.)

Disabled people do not have to pay VAT on equipment designed or adapted to help their daily lives, but the rule is quite wide-ranging and goes further than many people think.

Large and experienced firms which specialise in supplying to disabled customers should know about VAT relief.

However not every firm is aware, particularly if it sells to customers other than disabled people.

Anyone who wants to request zero-rating on a purchase (meaning that the VAT amount is removed) has to remember

that the item must have been designed to be suitable for use by disabled people and that it must relate to their disability.

For example, someone with a visual impairment cannot ask for zero-rating on a bed.

The good news is that buying by lease or hire also qualifies for relief on all higher priced goods, particularly with cars. This means that a disabled person can still gain from zero-rating even if he or she can only pay by instalments.

According to HM Customs & Excise, people with "severe abnormalities" or "severe injuries" qualify for zero-rating on medical and surgical supplies. These definitions include spinal injuries, amputation, severe disfigurement and blindness, but the list is not exhaustive. It admits that the terms do not have a precise legal meaning so any disabled person with a condition not mentioned may still qualify.

Any medical or surgical item can be zero-rated so long as it is designed for the relief of a condition in the above categories and is for that individual's personal use. Examples include artificial



Work it out: Brotherwood Conversions will give advice on savings

limbs and special clothing, footwear and wigs.

Home equipment

People with mobility problems can ask for zero-rating on equipment to assist in getting around the home. Many items fall into this category, including adjustable beds designed for disabled people, stair lifts for wheelchair users and commode chairs.

In fact, any equipment bought to help a disabled person gain mobility in the home should be all right.

To check that a particular item qualifies, look at the manufacturer's brochure or the retailer's way of selling it.

Does the literature state that it was designed for disabled people? Is it advertised exclusively in magazines such as *Disability Now*? Is it actually bought mainly by people without disabilities?

If it was designed for disabled people, it can be zero-rated.

Emergency alarm call systems can also be zero-rated so long as the system is installed in the disabled person's home and links the system either to a control which holds medical information on the disabled person or a specific person, such as a relative.

A car is eligible for zero-rating if it is designed or substantially altered to carry a disabled person in a wheelchair or on a stretcher and no more than five others, including the driver.

For the whole purchase to be zero-rated, the company must arrange for the conversions to be carried out before supplying the car or only the cost for the conversions can be zero-rated.

Most companies which sell adapted cars will know about the VAT rules, but a general car company might not and will need to contact the local VAT office for reassurance.

The only goods which Customs & Excise specifically

state as being liable for VAT are spectacles, contact lenses, hearing aids and dentures, but these items are in general use and were not designed for disabled people.

Services too

Disabled customers should also look for savings on services which can be zero-rated. VAT relief on services relates only to work carried out on the upkeep of the goods already mentioned, and not to other services which may assist disabled people, for example taxi hire or therapy session.

These services include installing, repairing, maintaining and adapting the likes of medical equipment, chair lifts, cars and wheelchairs.

The onus may sometimes be on the disabled customer to explain VAT relief to companies. It is a good idea to discuss the matter before any work is done and refer the firm to the local VAT office to prevent quibbling when the invoice is sent out.

There is also the possibility of obtaining relief on building alterations to your house, but relief will depend on the extent of the work done.

The customer has to declare his or her disability on a form and their intention to claim VAT relief on the purchase. The firm keeps this form.

The wording is quite specific, but there are sample forms in VAT notice 701/7 *Reliefs for people with disabilities* which is available free from Customs & Excise, tel: 0171-620 1313, or at your local VAT office.

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Dance

Across Your Heart

I knew this was going to be a powerful performance, but nothing could have prepared me for the onslaught of images and ideas I was about to experience.

Choreographed by Emily Claid *Across Your Heart* (pictured above) explored power, eroticism, religion, pleasure and beauty. Claid focused on what happens when power and pleasure collide – how quickly laughter can turn to tears, or worship into obsession.

These themes were expressed in dance, text and song and devised by the whole company.

Watching the work felt like a roller coaster ride. One moment the audience could be laughing out loud and the next feel close to tears. Some of the images are raw, brutal and even frightening, although the sheer pace of the piece never allowed it to become sentimental or self-indulgent.

The choreography was technically and physically demanding. It is a very accessible

work that doesn't require the audience to have any knowledge of dance. Many of the scenes wouldn't seem out of place on a Madonna video and the music could fit into a club setting.

This is the first work without the outstanding David Toole – considered by many to be the company's star. To my surprise, the piece almost worked better because of his absence. It allowed the disabled and non-disabled dancers the chance to develop to their full potential.

Across Your Heart is definitely CandoCo's best work yet and it is probably the best piece of theatre I have ever seen.

Kirsteen Knight

Video top five

1. **SUDDEN DEATH** (CIC): Action adventure with Van Damme. 
2. **GET SHORTY** (MGM/UA):  Hollywood antics with Travolta.
3. **HEAT** (Warner): Pacino and de Niro raise the temperature. 
4. **CASINO** (CIC): Scorsese money spinner with Sharon Stone. 
5. **JUMANJI** (Columbia Tristar): A board game comes to life. 

Chart supplied by MIRB

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All Heart 'n Soul

When we started Heart 'n Soul none of us dreamt that we would be celebrating our tenth birthday. But, ten years on, here we are. Now we want to say thank you! So we are hosting *Art From The Heart* (28 Oct-9 Nov at the Albany Theatre, London) a two week birthday party featuring some of the people who have inspired us over the years, special collaborations and a brand new, never to be repeated, Heart 'n Soul show – *Roar*. The idea for Heart 'n Soul was born out of a dream to establish ourselves as a performance group that could meet regularly to explore ideas, have fun, and create musical productions that would communicate to audiences.

Our aims have always been high. As Pino Frumiento says, we are "working together to change people's attitudes, to get together, to love one another and for peace in the world".

Early in our life we realised

that we wanted to share Heart 'n Soul with as many as possible. We established three performance groups and the expanding outreach programme.

The most exciting development has been the success of the Beautiful Octopus Clubs. These encapsulate our vision of showing the world what it's all about – a nightclub filled to bursting with people having a good time with great entertainment, great music, great vibes. And nearly everyone has a learning disability.

Our dream is to revolutionise the expectations of learning disabled people all over the world. We would like to see a Beautiful Octopus Club in every town, with resident groups, musicians, DJs and MCs taking control. We would like everyone to celebrate with us and to see the opportunities keep on expanding.

Alix Barker and Mark Williams



Kent mouth-painting artist Wendy Barber had an exhibition in October at Girlings in Herne Bay. Her work includes *Working Horse* (left).

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Television

Chris Davies

I hope Tyne Tees believe in the saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery". The new series of *See Hear* (beginning 29 October) boasts a monthly examination of the issues "Behind the News".



To *Sign On* viewers, this will have a ring of familiarity, because the Channel 4 series made by Tyne Tees has been performing the same function for some years. Still, the two are not exactly the same, and deaf people do have very little access to news and current affairs.

The BBC Disability Programmes Unit's late night series of documentaries, *Over the Edge*, is back. The first, "Remember Me" (17 October), was one of David Hevey's exquisite pictorial essays, this time about people who knew they were going to die of AIDS.

This programme shared the same subject with Desmond Wilcox in the first of his new series of *The Visit*. In "Rebecca's Secret" (18 October), Wilcox told how Rebecca and her daughter Bonnie lived and died keeping the secret of the cause of their illness to themselves because of the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS.

You might think from this that the programme was an indictment of social prejudice, but this is not Wilcox's style. More important for him is reinforcing the tragedy of life-threatening illnesses and the emotive power of being a victim. There couldn't be a greater difference between the Wilcox approach and the Hevey style.

The second *Over The Edge*, "Merry-Go-Round" (24 October, BBC2) featured two mental health system survivors who were trying to overcome the bureaucratic system to gain social security. One persevered long enough to be given a home, and yet, as the postscript stated, after filming finished, he gave it up. Shame that an example like this reinforces prejudice against homeless people.

The third *Over The Edge*, "Rhyming Triplets" (1 October) was Sian Vasey's excellent showcase for disabled artists – entertaining and informative in equal parts.

Finally, a quick word of praise for *QED* – normally too medically oriented. In "Pride and Prejudice" (18 October), about facial disfigurement, it attacked the social stigma so common against such people. No victims here, just pride. Maybe Mr Wilcox should watch this too.

Freelance Dee-jaying
By John Clancy
£8.99, How to Books

You can get it if you really want! That's the motto of DJ John Clancy, 55, from Gillingham in Kent, author of *Freelance Dee-jaying*.

The disabled dad-of-two tried his hand at being a disco jock more than 25 years ago and, after overcoming various obstacles, hasn't looked back.

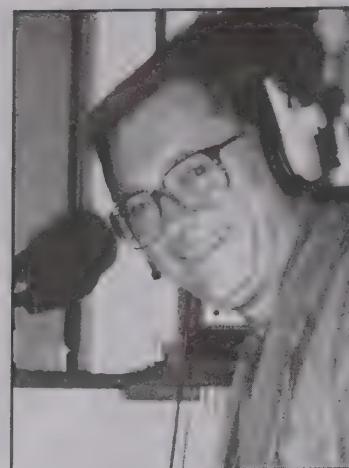
Now he's written a comprehensive book to give other would-be music maestros a helping hand.

"I started out doing hospital radio and then moved on to disco and local radio," he said. "It wasn't always easy with my disabilities but if you're determined you will succeed." (He lost the use of his right arm through polio when he was five and has a muscle-wasting disease in his legs.)

"The age old attitude of 'you can't do that, you're disabled' is something that I often faced but you just learn to show that you can."

He had the idea for a book after taking early retirement from his local council job three years ago.

"I needed something to do and thought writing would be the thing. I contacted publisher



DJ John at work

How to Books. They liked my idea so it went ahead."

The result is a book telling you all you need to know about the world of dee-jaying from choosing equipment or music, to legal advice and advertising tips.

"Once you start it gets into the blood and isn't easy to stop," said John.

"The best part is being able to entertain people and come away at the end of the night knowing that everyone has enjoyed themselves and it was down to you."

"The book is a great achievement for me. There's something with my name on out there and I feel like I've made my mark."

Jane Dunford

Dancing with Mister D: notes on life and death
By Bert Keizer
£9.99, Doubleday

A blunt, brave and funny book, in the form of a doctor's diary entries and reminiscences about patients, relatives and colleagues. It makes entertaining and disturbing reading for those who actively resist calls for legalised euthanasia.

Keizer is a doctor in a hospice for terminally ill people in Amsterdam. He is angry with Mister D - Death - who here is his constant companion. Sometimes Keizer is Death's adversary, sometimes his accomplice, for in Holland euthanasia is legal.

There are few easy deaths and no easy answers. As technology and the means to extend life, perhaps infinitely, advance we must recognise that many deaths are "managed" to some extent. Yet there is a crucial difference between someone with a few weeks of pain and nausea left who asks a doctor to up the morphine, and a young man, not dying, who has "do not resuscitate" put on his medical notes without his consent, as happened here recently - at the bidding of the Official Solicitor.

I like Keizer. I didn't expect to.

I would be grateful to have such a witty, honest and humane person around for my last days. We see dozens of "his" deaths. He indignantly tells one stroppy patient: "You can't order that like an omelette, you know." His First Commandment is: "Don't ever terminate a life for cosmetic reasons. I mean, don't do it because it's so hard on the spectators to have to watch the suffering."

If all doctors were as conscientious as Keizer, their presence at our bedsides wouldn't be so alarming. But, given prevailing attitudes to disability, our treatment is increasingly more likely to be managed according to the priorities of an NHS manager on a tight budget.

When Parents Die
By Rebecca Abrams
£8.99, Thorsons

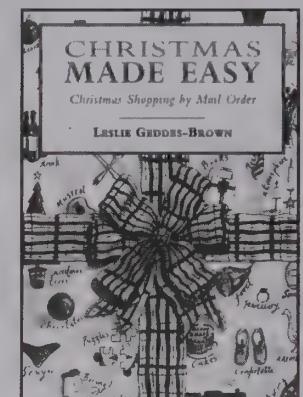
This is an inspiring account of the effects of a parent's death on people of all ages, but particularly those in their teens and twenties. Eight years after my father's death it had an enormous amount to offer me in my ongoing, I know lifelong, struggle to live with his death and my loss. Don't shy away from it because of the subject. It will be invaluable whether

you have lost your parents or still have them to lose.

Agnes Fletcher

Book offer

Christmas is fast approaching and it's time to face the shopping. But if you dread High Street crowds, *Christmas Made Easy - Christmas Shopping by Mail Order* is for you.



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Last, and best, at Wembley

Rob Jackson reports

This is the last Naidex at Wembley, and the best for years.

The show has adapted well to criticism and the interest shown by disabled people. Exhibitors have increasingly focused on the retail end of the market. By comparison with stands aimed at disabled people, stands selling to the "trade" have seemed dowdy.

From now on, organisers Reed Exhibition Companies plan separate trade and public shows.

The trade show, Naidex Care Management, will be held in May at the NEC, Birmingham. It will cater for the care industry and provide new products targeted at professional and business buyers.

A series of regional events called Independent Living will carry on the Naidex tradition of informing people about equipment and services at a local level, concentrating on mobility, personal care, public access, community transport, education and information.

While most industries have this two tier approach, the care industry does not divide comfortably on these lines. It lives in the main on public funds.

If the Government devolves money to users via vouchers, direct payments, the Independent Living Fund, or whatever, a retail market in aids and equipment will develop quickly.

If, on the other hand, vouchers and direct payments are made available only to a tiny minority of disabled people, products will begin again to reflect the purchasing policies of health and welfare professionals.

Meanwhile, Naidex Care Management will have an important service to perform for manufacturers and wholesalers, selling to homes, private hospitals and professional buyers.

Retailers at Independent Living events will compete for user attention — and I hope there will be enough of them to give a worthwhile show.

Indoor/outdoor chairs

Indoor/outdoor user-controlled power wheelchairs are now available on prescription. £6.4 million is available this year, which will buy a chair for one in 10,000 of the population. Currently, about one person in 500 is entitled to an indoor powered chair, so if all the money is spent on wheelchairs, 19 out of 20 indoor powered

wheelchair users are going to be disappointed.

Nor will you be able to put your own money to the value of the prescription to get what you want. Vouchers, announced at the same time, are not happening yet, so the money has just been divided up between the local NHS wheelchair providers.

The providers are muttering darkly about the cost implications of re-training their assessors, repair and maintenance engineers and

MOBILITY

increased administration, not to mention driving tests, test tracks, risk assessment and third party insurance for users.

I hope someone has determined just how much of the £6.4 million is to be spent on chairs, because if it's left to wheelchair services most of an utterly inadequate amount will just go on jobs for the boys.

Of the five manufacturers who have secured NHS national contracts, only two were showing their indoor/outdoor chair at Naidex.

Ross & Bonnyman's Junior Travlla in its retail trim is super looking, cheap and cheerful — thoroughly serviceable mobility for eight-14-year-olds. The contract version may turn out to be black and dismal.



Last Naidex at Wembley, but the first for one young customer, trying out Symmetrikit's improved chair with Lowzone cushion

GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

The adult version Travlla 2, is also available on NHS contract, and various models of the

Vitesse are being considered. Junior Travlla retails around £2,000, but on contract will

cost the NHS £1,200. If vouchers ever happen, will users be adding £800 of their own money to the prescription for exactly the same chair?

Ross & Bonnyman, Forfar, Scotland, tel: (01307) 466262.

RJ Mobility has two indoor models on the contract list, Marksman and Gem Mk2, with the new Independent under consideration.

The Marksman foldaway was the nicest of the contract chairs on display with fully upholstered reclining seat, adjustable head/neck rest, and a range of features and options. It dismantles and folds up very neatly, but the small handleable batteries have limited the range to under ten miles. Retailing for £2,555, the contract price will be about 60 per cent, £1,533.

The Independent is less flash but strips down into even smaller, manageable units.

RJ Mobility, Weston-super-Mare, tel: (01934) 628151.

Of course, your local wheelchair service can prescribe any wheelchair, not just contract models, provided you fit the local eligibility criteria. So, if what they offer won't go up the modest gradient of your street, complain.

Lifts and standing aid

The Wessex exhibition caravan was showing the first of an entirely new range of passenger lifts which are quiet, compact and attractively designed.

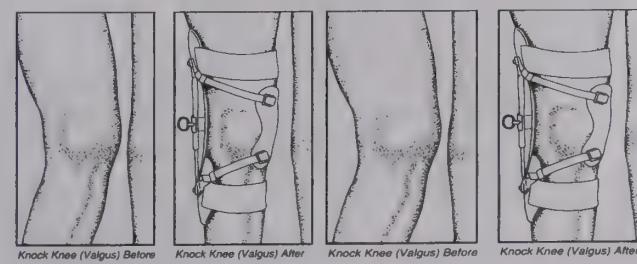
The through-floor wheelchair lift seems to have incorporated answers to nearly all the snags

Continued on page 22

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DN11/96

More colour, more comfort

by Jane Joester

The last Wembley Naidex had us professionals queuing to enter while disabled visitors raced through in front of us. Reverse discrimination?

There were several improvements to equipment I already use and recommend. The Convaid Cruiser buggy from the Mobility Aids Centre (Peterborough, tel: [01733] 342242) is a specialised, folding buggy that can be fitted with adaptations to make it suitable for most children, whatever the disability, and it folds small enough to go into many aircraft overhead lockers. Available in three sizes up to small adult, I have used it

successfully with children who need a very complicated wheelchair system to achieve function, but need a lighter, supportive alternative to their wheelchair for leisure use.

There are three types of castor, including larger ones for difficult under-foot conditions like bridle paths.

The harnesses and straps suit most children and the buggy now comes in a range of colours, including raspberry and purple! The limitation of only slightly reclined or fixed positions will be removed when a tilt-in-space facility (Tilt-n-Tote) becomes available soon.

There are not enough growing chairs on the market, so it was good to find on the same stand



Welcome addition: a growing wheelchair, the Sioux, from Horacek

the Sioux, a growing wheelchair from Horacek. With seat width of 22.5cm-33.5cm (about 8-13in), it should last for years. The frame parts all extend, yet the frame size is always in proportion to the seat size for balance and manoeuvrability. But do check the stability of any lightweight chair you buy for your child.

DCS Joncare from Abingdon had three tricycles on show, which look like ordinary trikes, but have low and extra low gearing for people who cannot exert ordinary pressure. The Pedals range (2 years to adult) have bucket or saddle seats (the saddle comes in three sizes), body supports, hip guides, low back pads, back/trunk and head supports and also a front support, which covers most needs. Tel: (01235) 523353.

The Rifton MOVE equipment has two add-ons we have been

asking for, which proves that Rifton listens to parents and therapists. A grab bar on the Gait trainer (a walking trainer that more young people are finding useful) can be used with or without the forearm prompts, and with a perspex

Mobility

Continued from page 21

of predecessors and will, I guess, soon be specified as standard in "Lifetime Homes" house designs.

Everything about these products reflects sound engineering and a real understanding of the limitations of modern housing and the needs of wheelchair users. The platform, for example, is 30mm thick which means the entry ramp is only inches long, and the step lift can be carried on its side through a standard door opening. Use of

CHILDREN

tray or communication aid — a great benefit as the "loss of voice" when using the walking aid has put a lot of people off. Tel: (01580) 880626.

The well-known Symmetrik postural seating systems now have a more comfortable seat, more pressure relief, alternative back and side support and a wipe clean, but breathable, fabric finish. A new seat cushion in Lozone foam is sculpted to give an integral pommel and side "horns" to control "windsweeping" of hips and there is an optional back cushion in the same material for people with sensitive skin. The arm rests can now adjust for a tall, thin person and the Roho pressure relief system can be incorporated.

Jane Joester is therapy co-ordinator at Scope's Meldreth Manor School.

hydraulics makes emergency lowering simple, reliable and safe. The carriage controls are beautifully designed and conveniently located.

The Step-Lift costs about £3,500 (installation extra), the Vertical Lift £7,200-£7,500 installed. Tel: (01794) 830303.

The Cama Handi-lift from Denmark is an indoor/outdoor wheelchair lift, very versatile and looks great. Cama are looking for a UK distributor. Tel: 00 45 98 430122.

The Stand-Master from California enables anyone with a spinal cord injury, but no loss of upper-body strength, to transfer without aid from a wheelchair and propel



Jazz on Mangar's stand: Steven Oliver and Simon Whiteside

themselves manually in a standing position. A sort of stand-up wheelchair, it takes apart easily without tools, is superbly made in lightweight aluminium and comes in a range of colours. Nestor Rehab Products is looking for a British manufacturer. Expected price: £1,700. Tel: 0101-818 707 1833.

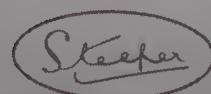
Rob Jackson is director of the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living (DCIL).

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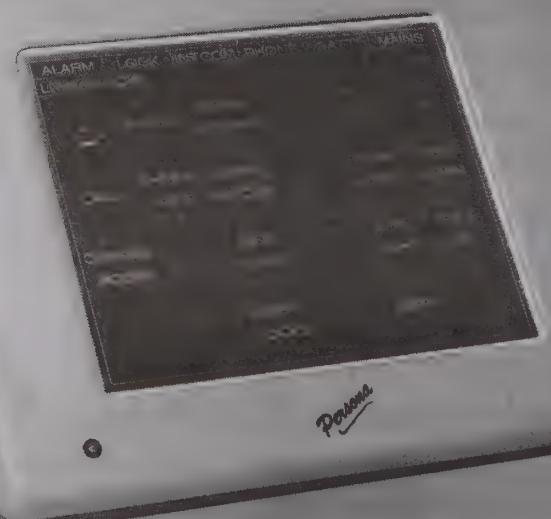
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Exciting ideas among the updates

by Julie O'Keeffe

It was disappointing to find so few truly new products at Naidex, but many companies are making changes that make a product more versatile, safer, easier to use, more in line with legislation, and so on.

The Mangar Bath Lift has been given a more streamlined, less obtrusive appearance. It is much lighter and dismantles into three pieces, none of which weigh more than 5kg. Though the weight of the seat is less, the overall capacity stays the same at about 20 stone.

It is powered by mains or battery air compression. The battery pack (Mangaroo) can also be used with other Mangar products. £285 for the seat unit, plus £275 for the mains compressor or £340 for the Mangaroo. Mangar International, tel: (01544) 267674.

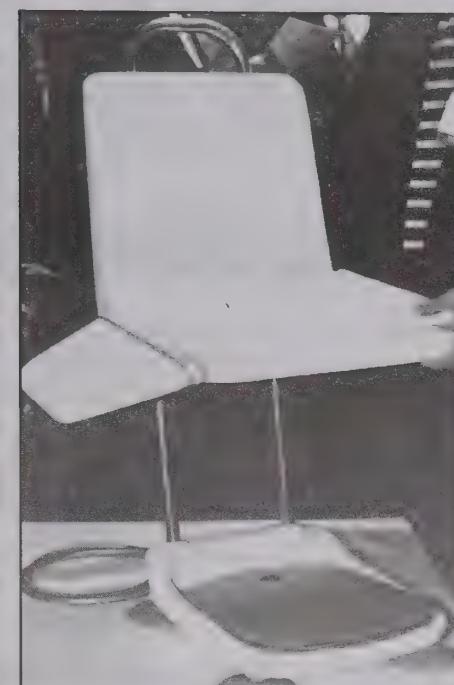
Cane and Able exhibited the Abletech Self Acting Bath Lift, a steel tubular base with cantilever action assisted by hydraulic gas. To lower the seat, you lean back gently, and to raise it you lean forward and release a lever under the seat. With a perforated seat and backrest, it can be used for showering too. Suitable for people 7.5 to 16 stone. £350. Cane and Able, tel: (01246) 261960.

Mountway showed an Inflatable Turning Aid, still at the prototype stage. Looking like a lilo, it goes on top of a single bed, each side tucked under the mattress like a fitted sheet. It has three long channels. If you want to turn over, one side inflates, the centre stays the same and the other side deflates. An inflatable bellow at the head end allows you to get from lying to sitting. It is operated by the user or carer with a hand held push button control, mains powered.

Improvements are still needed, but with little competition and what there is much more expensive, this is an interesting product. Estimated price £1,000-£1,500. Mountway, tel: (01873) 831678.

Raymar's Roho pressure relief cushions, air filled for people at high risk of pressure sores, have in recent years incorporated postural control too.

The new Airlite cushion is for users at medium rather than high risk. It has a contoured foam base with thigh channels, an abductor pommel plus a rectangular area at the rear made of low profile Roho cells



Seating innovations, (from left): Split-Lift Riser Chair, Mangar's Bath Lift and a bucking bronco ridden by Fiona Neal from Loughborough

which protect the bones in one's bottom. No set up or maintenance is needed and it has a concave base to compensate for the saggy canvas found in most NHS wheelchairs. It is covered with a two-way stretch, breathable cover, with non-skid base and front and back markers so it cannot be used back to front. Reasonably priced at £110. Raymar, tel: (01491) 578446.

The Split-Lift Riser Chair is a new idea. It is a powered riser chair in a range of materials, colours, wood finishes and sizes, with back and armrest heights, filled in sides and optional wings. The lifting action is different from a

conventional riser chair. As the front part of the seat tilts forward slowly, the back of the seat rises level. By lifting you

IN THE HOME

vertically, less weight is transferred down through leg muscles and feet than with other chairs, and TS Ability says in its literature that there are tests to prove this. £599, tel: 0181-695 6700.

Bakare bed model 3010 is a variable posture bed, which, at £1,895 including mattress, is priced very competitively.

It is made of four sections. Three move up and down and

the other section, supporting your bottom, moves back in a horizontal plane without squashing you. (See *problems of variable posture beds in DN September*) Bed height can be adjusted using hand-held controls and there are wooden full length safety rails on both sides that pull up and down. Tel: (01752) 342222.

Lastly, if you or your children's school are not near any Riding for the Disabled and have £2,400 to spare - or you can persuade your local physiotherapist that someone needs walking therapy - the Tools for Living project at Brunel Institute for Bioengineering has developed

Babs (Brunel Active Balance Saddle) for children and adults needing to develop upper body control. The motor exactly emulates the movement of a horse, yet allows the pelvis and upper body to rotate as in walking. For more information, contact Romulus Technology, tel: (01895) 814920.

Julie O'Keeffe is deputy head of data services at the Disabled Living Foundation and senior occupational therapist at the Spinal Unit, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore.

Naidex Microtech coverage is being held over til next month.

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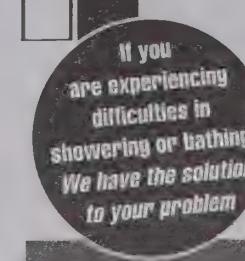
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Dear
Ann

Send your letters to: Ann Darnbrough, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

Give me danger

I would like to follow the example of a woman who appeared on the Channel Four programme, *Inside Out*, who wanted to try out risky sporting activities so that she would not look back and wish that she had had a go before she became too disabled.

I used to be an avid cyclist. I would now like to try using three wheelers with either leg or hand traction. I'd also like to try quad biking and perhaps off-road 4WD vehicles.

And then I would like to try white water rafting and perhaps canoeing and water-skiing. I don't know where to begin, but I'm sure you will.

Martin, London

There are a number of centres in the UK for canoeing and for white water rafting where the right conditions have been set up artificially. Newcomers are welcome and are accompanied by an experienced rafter.

The British Canoe Union (BCU) points out that canoeing is a sport in which people with a wide range of disabilities can

take part. There are several groups which make special provision for disabled people, and many kayaks and canoes which are eminently suited or can be easily adapted for special needs.

The BCU keeps a register of instructors and others who want to help disabled people try canoeing, and they can put you in touch with someone locally.

The British Disabled Water-ski Association will be glad to give you details of facilities around the UK. People with many different disabilities can enjoy the sport, and instructors use ingenious training aids.

The Cycling Project for the North West (CPNW) has a Wheels For All project. It would be glad to provide information about suitable cycles and holidays in the north west. It hopes that the project will eventually be nationwide. CPNW uses Chevron's handcycle products and wheelchairs.

As for 4-wheel drive vehicles, did you see the article about the Gofar countryside buggy

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

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DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick can give disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and fully accredited Methodist local preacher. Talk to her on (01708) 477582 on Thursday afternoons, 1pm-5pm and Mondays 6pm-10pm.



Sponsored by BT

let society know that young people can also have arthritis. It has some very good leaflets for younger people which I am sure you would find encouraging.

With this information, you might be able to answer back more easily!

The Scottish Canoe Association, Caledonian House, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ, tel: 0131-3177314

CANI, c/o SCNI, House of Sport, Upper Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5LA, tel: (01247) 469907

Welsh Canoeing Association, Frongoch, Bala, Gwynedd LL23 7NU, tel: (01678) 521199

British Canoe Union, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS, tel: 0115-982 1100

British Disabled Water Ski Association, The Tony Edge Centre, Heron Lake, Wraysbury, Middlesex TW19 6HW, tel: (01784) 483664

Cycling Project for the North West, The Environmental Institute, Bolton Road, Swinton, Manchester M27 8UX, tel: 0161-794 1926

Chevron, 18 Summers Road, Brunswick Park, Liverpool L3 4BL, tel: 0151-707 1146

Stephen Skurray, Browning Hill, Baughurst, nr Basingstoke, Hampshire RG26 5JZ, tel: (01734) 814840

Arthritis Care, 18 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD, tel: 0171-916 1500; free helpline 0800 289 170 Monday to Friday noon-4pm

RADAR, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF, tel: 0171-250 3222



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Your stars

By DN's astrologer
Marion Stanton



SCORPIO (24 Oct-22 Nov)

An emotional, maybe romantic, time is waiting for you at the end of November. But don't build yourself up too much. There isn't always a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov-21 Dec)
If you feel inclined to fly into a rage, try to keep a lid on it! The anger is probably due to inner rather than outside forces. Female friends may vex you so try to stay calm.

CAPRICORN (22 Dec-20 Jan)

Avoid making important decisions at the start of the month – your vision could be clouded. You are still feeling generous so allow yourself to give.

AQUARIUS (21 Jan-19 Feb)

You might feel like rebelling against something, particularly towards the end of the month. This could be the time to strike while the iron is hot, but beware of getting burned.

PISCES (20 Feb-20 March)

If you find it difficult to communicate your ideas this month, take heart. It will only be short lived. A male friend might be able to help you out.

ARIES (21 March-20 April)

The gift of the gab comes your way this month. Try to be realistic if you can or things could get out of hand.

TAURUS (21 April-21 May)

Tension mounts in relationships. It could either lead to a passionate encounter or sparks flying. Maybe you should keep your head down until the heat is off.

GEMINI (22 May-22 June)

The ideas might flow but, with the full moon in your sign late in November, they could lead to confusion. Don't jump at the first opportunity unless you are sure of what you are letting yourself in for.

CANCER (23 June-23 July)

If a lull appears, don't be disheartened. It's probably time you took a well deserved rest.

LEO (24 July-23 August)

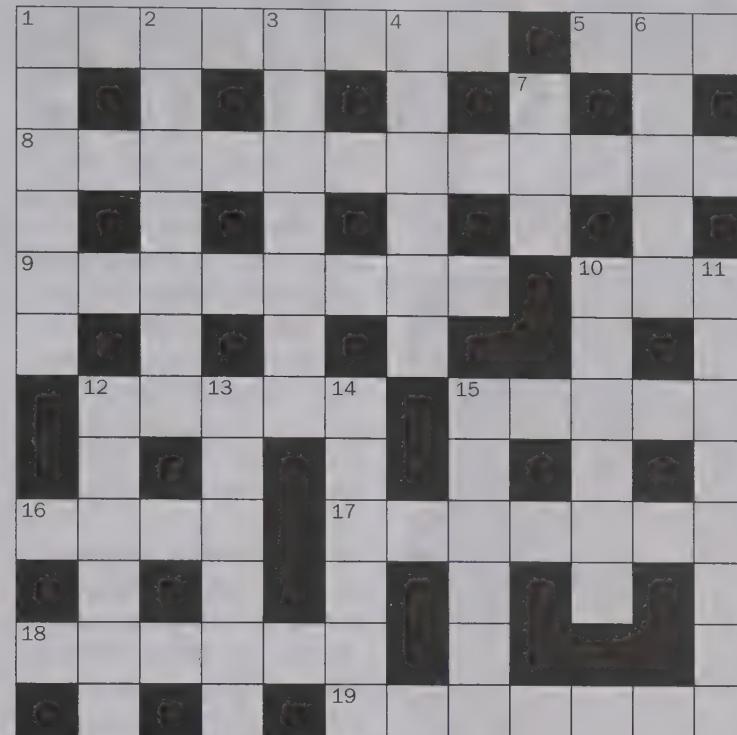
Obstacles from a male friend or family member are not as insurmountable as they seem. It's a passing phase and you'll soon be back on track.

VIRGO (24 August-23 Sept)

This is a good month to use your energy to the full. If you've had a project on the back burner for a while start working towards making it a reality.

LIBRA (24 Sept-23 Oct)

Librans in a romantic mood should be able to begin to develop their relationships now. If you really want to go for it, don't let older relations or friends stand in your way.



DN's crossword

Answers on page 27

COMPILED BY REBECCA REYNOLDS

ACROSS

- 1,6 down. Type of disability (8,5)
5. Secret agent (3)
8. Vile blue bean (anag)
9. Extremely important (8)
10. What 5 across uses? (3)
12. Saying (5)
15. Division (5)
16. Applaud (4)
17. London football team (7)
18. Lose control (slang) (3,3)
19. Heighten or intensify (7)

DOWN

1. Mobility aid (6)
2. Rib duel (anag)
3. Losing hair (7)
4. Difference in years (3,3)
6. See 1 across
7. Tread softly (3)
10. Silent (anag)
11. Rent cane (anag)
12. Numb or unconscious (6)
13. Have ambition (6)
14. Get out (6)
15. Oral communication (6)

We've got it taped!

Did you know *Disability Now* is available on tape and now on computer disk too? For more information contact Davina on tel: 0171-383 4575.

Trivia teasers

1. What is the name of the shadow Minister for Disabled People?
2. Bert, Ernie, Big Bird and The Cookie Monster live on which seedy street in America?
3. The Algarve is a tourist hotspot in which country?
4. Which American stars as Jane Austen's hapless heroine in a new film version of *Emma*?
5. Who is the new manager of the England football team?
6. What is the American national anthem called?
7. What is the name of the country once called Siam?
8. Whose ears are biggest – the Indian or African elephant?
9. Who is the patron saint of sailors?
10. What is a John Dory?

You must be joking...

Q. What is worse than when it's raining cats and dogs?
A. When it's hailing taxis.



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if so

Helen Ley House

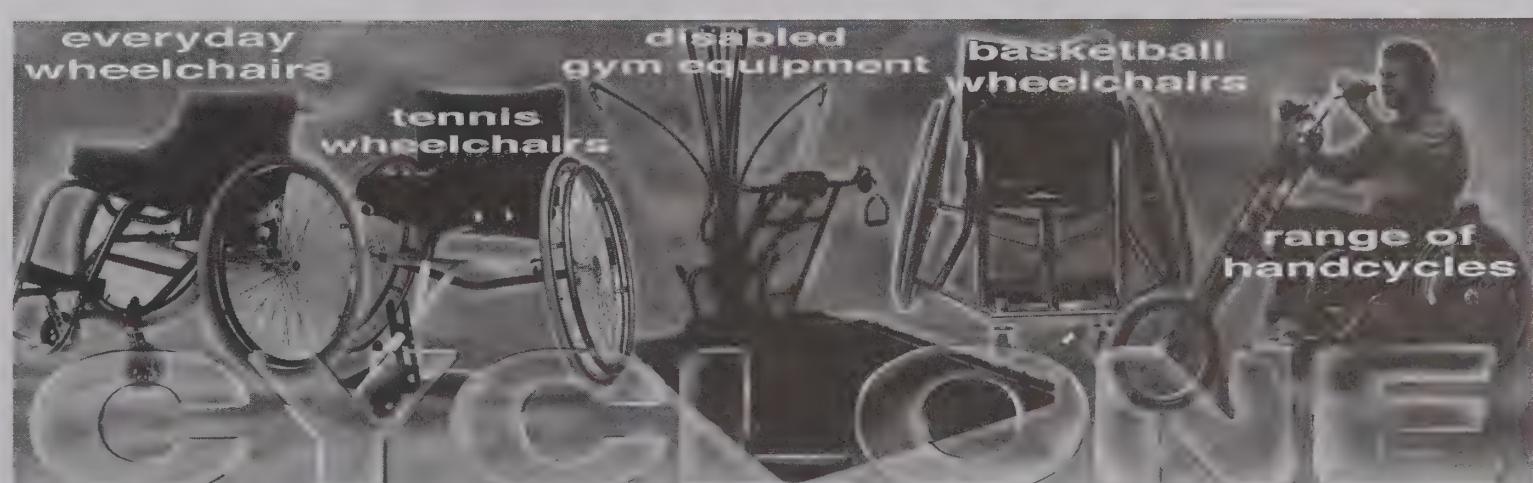
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DN 11/96

View worth the climb

Pamela Spark tries out Tarn Hows wheelchair walk in Cumbria



Walk with a view: Pamela explores the Cumbrian countryside on her buggy

I have always loved the Lake District. With its mountain crags, wooded valleys, and shimmering lakes, there is rich variety in every season.

Before I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), there was nothing I enjoyed more at the weekends than being able to set out with the walking group, my rucksack on my back, striding into wild lonely places.

The worst thing for me about

MS was the thought that I would have to give all this up. At first I continued to go along with the ramblers and to sit and wait until they returned. But that made me miserable, and I soon stopped.

Within a few years it became obvious that I needed a wheelchair to get around, and I felt this was the end of the line.

However, one weekend I went to the Lake District with friends (George and his dog

Ben) and asked at a tourist information centre about places to take a wheelchair.

I was delighted to find a booklet of 21 wheelchair walks for sale, and I couldn't wait to get started. Tarn Hows near Coniston was my first wheelchair walk in the countryside, and is very special to me.

It was a perfect October day when we set off – clear blue skies and warm sunshine, with

the leaves and bracken turning rich shades of gold.

Tarn Hows is a series of small lakes and islands, with a path around through undulating woodland. As we approached by car, we saw a small parking place for orange badge holders on the crest of a hill. From there we went along a track for about 250 yards to a spectacular viewpoint, looking down on the lake reflecting the autumn colours of the trees, with the mountains in the distance. We sat for a while taking it all in. Then we returned to the car and drove down to the main car park about a mile further along the road.

The whole area is owned by the National Trust, and one of its rangers (who works from a Land Rover in the car park) gave us a useful leaflet for people with special needs. He also has a taped guide and a walkman which can be borrowed for £5 (refund on return) to add to the enjoyment for those with impaired vision.

We began the two-mile circuit around the lakes from here. Although the information leaflet mentioned gradients of one in five with short slopes of one in four, and the need for two strong companions for wheelchairs, we decided we would just see how far we could manage.

We were rewarded with wonderful views of the lake through the trees.

Each corner we turned, a new vista opened up. The path was fairly smooth crushed stone, carpeted in places with pine needles, which gave off a fresh woody smell.

All we could hear was the babbling of streams as they made their way down to the lake, the calling of the birds, and the bleating of sheep on the surrounding hills.

George had a real struggle

trying to push me up some of the hills, but out of nowhere other walkers appeared to lend a hand. I must have been smiling from ear to ear as we exchanged greetings and moved on. There were a good number of seats along the way for George to rest and take in the views.

When we finally went back to the car feeling tired (George) but exhilarated (me), I knew I had rediscovered the enjoyment of country walking again – in a new way.

We ended our day at the coffee shop of nearby Brantwood House, sampling its superb home-made cakes and looking out across Lake Coniston. As the man on the next table said to me: "This place has the best view in the country." It was a perfect end to a perfect day.

Now I have my own buggy, and have been campaigning for greater access in my area of County Durham.



Pamela, George and Ben take a well-earned rest

This summer, my first collection of wheelchair walks has been published, detailing 18 accessible walks in Teesdale and Weardale, which are available from local tourist information centres and called *Walking With Wheels*.

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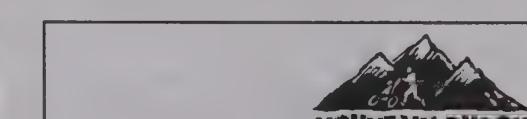
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3. Portugal
4. Gwyneth Paltrow
5. Glen Hoddle
6. The Star Spangled Banner
7. Thailand
8. African
9. St Nicholas
10. A type of fish

Info

FAIR, based in Edinburgh, is an advice shop for people with learning disabilities and their families. It provides information on everything from housing and holidays to benefits and schools. For more information, contact: FAIR, 25-27 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DB, tel: 0131-662 1962.



John Bradbury takes advantage of facilities at Canolfan yr Orsedd, a fully adapted pottery for disabled people in Llandudno. For information, tel: (01492) 878041.

Look out for

Show of Hands adaptation of *Phantom of the Opera* (right) is on tour until 30 November. The show is performed by five deaf and hearing actors in a combination of British Sign Language, sign supported English, sign mime and spoken word. For details contact: Show of Hands, Aberdeen Lodge, 24 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA, tel/fax/minicom: 0171-359 8224.

Baritone Thomas Quasthoff is joining the English Chamber Orchestra at the Barbican Hall on 13 November as soloist in a programme which will include works by Mozart. For more information, contact English Chamber Orchestra, 2 Coningsby Road, London W5 4HR, tel: 0181-840 6565.

Freaks is a theatre adaptation of Tod Browning's controversial 1932 film about life in a sideshow. Performed by Interact Theatre and 27a Access Artspace, it draws on the company members' experiences of disability. 27 and 28 November at Phoenix Arts, 11 Newarke Street, Leicester LE1 5SS, tel: 0116-255 4854.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 1. Cerebral 5. Spy 8. Unbelievable 9. Critical 10. Eye
 12. Adage 15. Split 16. Clap 17. Chelsea 18. Let rip 19. Enhance
 Down: 1. Crutch 2. Rebuild 3. Balding 4. Age gap 6. Palsy
 7. Pad 10. Enlist 11. Entrance 12. Asleep 13. Aspire 14. Escape
 15. Speech



What's on

Awareness and confidence course for professionals working with people with disabilities 1-3 November 1996. For details, contact: The Administrator, Bendrigg Trust, Bendrigg Lodge, Old Hutton, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 0NR, tel: (01539) 723766.

Toys and Play for Deaf Children is a workshop organised by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) on 2 November at the YMCA City Branch in London. For details contact: Allie Hamilton, Training and Conference Officer, NDCS, 15 Dufferin Street, London EC1Y 8PD, tel/minicom: 0171-250 0123.

Quality Time - We Don't Want To Be Minded is the annual conference of Mid Suffolk Rethink On Disability. It takes place on 7 November at the Community Centre in Needham Park. For details, contact: Patrick Kennedy-Cooke, Committee Administrator, Rethink Disability, c/o The Library, Milton Road North, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1EX, tel: (01449) 770127.

The annual conference of the National Care Homes Association (NCHA) is 7-8 November at the De Vere Hotel in Swindon. For details, contact: NCHA, Third Floor, Martin House, 84-86 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BQ, tel: 0171-831 7090.

Careers Direct 96 recruitment fair for students and graduates with disabilities on 8 November at Wembley Conference Centre. Meet employers like Boots, the NHS, the Midland Bank and Marks and Spencer. Improve your chances of getting the job you want with workshops on job skills and a CV surgery. For more information, contact: Louise Collins, Arberry Pink, Chelsea Wharf, London SW10 0QJ, tel: 0171-352 5100.

Sharing Good Practice: current issues and innovations on 9 November at the University of Birmingham. A conference organised by PMLD Link for professionals who work with people with profound and multiple disabilities. For details, contact: Carol Ouvry, The Old Rectory, Hope Mansell, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5TL, tel: (01989) 750382.

Looking Good - Feeling Better, a one-day workshop to explore the importance of managing your appearance and how it can affect your self-esteem, on 27 November at the Disabled Living Centre in Manchester. For details, contact: Mary Guest, Education and Training Co-ordinator, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Cheetham, Manchester M8 8QA, tel: 0161-832 3678.

Help

Would you like to help with research on furniture design for people with disabilities? If so, please contact: Kevin Jenkins, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 2JZ.

As part of its research, the Disablism Income Group would like to hear from people on low income who need regular prescriptions but are exempt from charges. If you can help, please call them at Unit 5, Archway Business Centre, 19-23 Wedmore Street, London N19 4RZ, tel: 0171-263 3981.

Are you a disabled person who knows about horse-riding? If so, David Player would like to hear from you. He wants to set up horse-riding facilities for disabled people and any advice would be appreciated. If you can help, please contact: David Player, Wheeling Around the Algarve, Apartado 3421, 8136 Almancil, Algarve, Portugal.

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Continued on page 30

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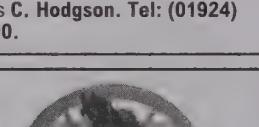
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For more details and order forms please ring **Independent Consultant Kevin Ward**, on Tel: 01284 703172, or send s.a.e. to **Kevin Ward, 11 Tomline Walk, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3JF.**

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Washable Absorbent Seat Pad £11.95, also suitable for wheelchairs

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FREE BROCHURE with Order, for details of the versatile Comfidri range to our FREEPOST address. Make cheques payable to Green Cross Healthcare and send cash/cheque to: **FREEPOST PR1573, Preston PR2 5BR.** Credit Card - **FREEPHONE 0800 413860.** Please add £2.00 for P&P.

(Green Cross Healthcare Ltd, Charter House, 4 Oakengate, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire PR2 5RX.)

Delivery within 21 days.

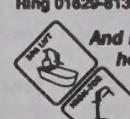
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Recruitment

GLAD

GREATER LONDON ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Are you a disabled person with a commitment to the disability movement?

Do you have the flair and imagination to take London's leading disability organisation into the next millennium?

Frances Hasler - our Director of the last seven years will leave GLAD at the end of the year. In the next few weeks we will start the search for a new

DIRECTOR

If you think you are the person for the job contact us after 8th November.

For details of the post please contact

Dorothy Dodoo at GLAD

336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA
Fax number 0171 274 7840

INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISOR

Special knowledge of equipment for disabled people?

Bring your experience to **Disability** - and help improve the quality of life for people throughout Oxfordshire.

Disability is a user-led, independent resource for disabled people and their support networks. The organisation offers three services: a helpline, a mobile outreach facility - and, the focus of this vacancy, equipment advice/demonstration.

In this initial one year contract as Independent Living Advisor, you'll take the lead in developing equipment advisory services - promoting freedom of choice in independent living. Working closely with **Disability** colleagues as well as the public, volunteers and professionals, you'll be appropriately qualified - with a knowledge of disability issues, excellent organisation skills and high levels of energy.

The post offers enormous scope for the development of professional links both at the centre and in the community - and for expanding the County-wide equipment resource. A car driver is essential - and a salary of £15,000 to £18,000 is offered.

For an application form and job description, please contact The Personnel Department, Radcliffe Infirmary NHS Trust, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HE. Alternatively telephone our 24 hour Job Line on 01865 228486. Please quote ref: 299/96KB. Closing date: 12th November 1996.

**Tenders****PERSONNEL SERVICES****Provision of Disability Awareness Training**

We are the fifth largest Local Authority in Scotland and are seeking tenders from organisations able to provide **Disability Awareness Training** to elected members and employees to promote understanding and change individual attitudes toward disability.

You must have a proven track record in this area and have people with disabilities as part of your training team.

Parties interested in obtaining copies of the tender specification and other relevant documents should contact:

The Director of Personnel Services, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton ML3 0AA. Telephone 01698 455604/454647

to whom tenders should be returned in the envelope which will be provided, by no later than 10 am on Wednesday 13 November 1996.



COUNCIL OFFICES ALMADA STREET HAMILTON SOUTH LANARKSHIRE ML3 0AA

WfAD

Waltham Forest Association of Disabled People

Waltham Forest Association of Disabled People
wish to appoint a disabled person as an

INDEPENDENT LIVING WORKER

Salary S.O.1 point 29, £18,231 (inc outer London weighting)
for 36 hours a week.

We need someone who has a thorough understanding of independent living issues and has experience of working with young disabled people (age 16 to 26) in a way that is empowering.

You must also have experience of working in a multi-cultural community and be able to work both with voluntary groups and statutory agencies. This job will offer an exciting opportunity to develop independent living in Waltham Forest. WfAD's office is fully accessible (but nearest parking is 200m). This post is open to job-share.

The closing date for applications is 12 noon Tuesday 26th November 1996. Interviews will be held on Thursday 5th December.

For an application form and further details please contact:

WfAD, Units 13/14 Alpha Business Centre, South Grove, Walthamstow, E17 7NX. Tel: 0181 509 0812 (voice) 0181 223 0359 (minicom)

WfAD is an Equal Opportunities Employer

RESEARCH PROJECT

Lewisham Association of People with Disabilities, in conjunction with other local disability groups and Lewisham Council, are undertaking a major research project into the prevalence of disability and the level of unmet need among disabled people in the borough of Lewisham.

Expressions of interest are invited from research organisations which are experienced and qualified in the following areas: Research design around 'hard to identify' groups/A range of data collection techniques/Data analysis.

It is essential that the organisation is able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of disability issues.

Research to be completed and final report to be available by end of April 1997.

Further information available from:

Lewisham Association of People with Disabilities, 67 Engleheart Road, London SE6 2HN. Tel: 0181 698 3775 (voice), Tel: 0181 698 7384 (minicom), Fax: 0181 695 0797

Closing date for expressions of interest: 12 November 1996.

GREATER LONDON ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

GLAD is looking for two exceptional people to develop and manage National Lottery Charities Board funded Advocacy Project. We hope to start the project in January 1997 and last for three years.

We are looking for an

Advocacy Project Officer

to be responsible for developing and supporting a network of self-advocacy groups throughout the London area.

The successful candidate will be a disabled person who has a clear understanding of the social model of disability and a particular aptitude for working with young disabled people. S/he will be a good organiser, self motivator, able to work to tight deadlines and capable presenter of the objectives and achievements of the project. S/he will have to show a positive commitment to equal opportunities.

Salary: NJC scale 6 (starting salary at point 26 - £17,652 inc Inner London weighting).

We are also looking for a

Part-time Administrative Assistant

to work primarily with the Advocacy Project.

The successful candidate must show that s/he is able to confidently use computers for word processing using Windows programme and have necessary skills and previous experience of working in similar posts. S/he must be able to use audio machine and have an ability to work systematically and to tight deadlines. S/he will also have to show an understanding of disability issues and a commitment to equal opportunities.

Salary: Scale 4 point 18 £8,492 inc Inner London weighting for 21 hours per week.

Closing date for both posts is 8th November 1996.

For further details and application form available (on tape or floppy disk) contact Dorothy Dodoo, at GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. Fax: 0171 274 7840.

GLAD is a registered charity (No. 293158) which through its work aims to improve opportunities for disabled people living or working in London.

GLAD is an equal opportunities employer.

hapa

Promoting play
for disabled
children

HAPA - a charity running six adventure playgrounds in London, and promoting the play needs of disabled children nationally.

We seek a

NATIONAL INFORMATION OFFICER

21 hours p/week, £10,282.68 (pro/rata), based in Fulham.

The successful candidate will have an understanding of play and disability issues, experience of providing high quality information services, research and editing skills and the ability to communicate effectively with a wide audience. Excellent organisational and planning skills, and the ability to work to tight deadlines within a small budget are also essential. Flexible hours can be arranged. We regret that our offices are not wheelchair accessible at present.

For further details and application forms write to: HAPA, Pryor's Bank, Bishop's Park, LONDON, SW6 3LA, enclosing an A4 sae. Closing date for applications is 8th November.

(Regd. Charity No. 284935)

Independent Living Advocacy Service**(3 posts in Essex)**

£18,717 to £21,351 initially on a temporary basis until 31 March 1997 with a view to permanent appointment subject to funding. (Part-time/job share considered).

These posts are funded and directed in partnership involving disabled people, Essex County Council Social Services and North Essex Health Authority.

The I.L.A.s will join an existing post holder to provide an Essex wide service, assisting disabled people in Essex to set up and run their own independent living schemes.

The I.L.A.s will have a variety of skills from advocacy to book-keeping; providing practical advice and support. Direct experience of disability is essential.

The three new posts will provide support to:

**1 - North Essex Adults; 1 - South Essex Adults;
1 - Older People with Disabilities.**

For further information and application pack call

01245 280868

or write to

**Mid-Essex Care Management & Advocacy Services,
Baddow Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9QU**

Closing date for receipt of applications 12th November 1996.

**PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR**

to the
JTSMA CONTACT FAMILY NETWORK

THREE YEAR FIXED TERM CONTRACT

Reg charity 327669

We are looking to recruit a person to develop our Contact Family Network across the United Kingdom. Our CF Network is a team of dedicated volunteers, all with personal life experience of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), who give support to the children and their families who live with SMA. The successful applicant will be responsible for developing the Network, providing support and training in order that the Contact Families offer appropriate support and activities on a regional basis throughout the UK to all families who have, or have lost, a child with Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

The person we are seeking to recruit will have experience of working with children with physical disabilities and their families; experience of child bereavement, good training, supervisory, communication and liaison skills.

The post is part time (24 hours per week) but may become full time in the future, and based in South Warwickshire.

Closing date for applications 22nd November 1996.

JTSMA is committed to equal opportunities.

For more information please contact: ANITA MACAULAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, 11 Ash Tree Close, Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9SA.

Tel: 01789 842377

This post is funded by the BBC Children in Need Appeal.

Deadlines for December issue:
booking by 8 November, camera ready artwork/copy by 12 November

Position wanted

FULLY QUALIFIED CARER seeks permanent job in South West London with disabled person. Hours and pay negotiable. Tel: 0181-543 6798.

Personal cont.

MALE ANTIQUE 32, no woodworm. Looking for friendly female 25-35 in similar position in Hampshire area, photo appreciated. Box No. 996

FRENCHMAN, NOW RETIRED, would like to engage in a friendly correspondence with a one-legged woman, preferably SAK or DAK. Age and nationality unimportant. Box No. 997

DAVID, 50, WOULD like to meet a fun loving lady who enjoys life as much as he does. Hobbies are fishing, gardening, socialising, music and learning piano. Would like a photo please. People with MS. Box No. 998

DEL BOY, WALKING wounded - but not a Trotter. Sincere, caring, fortyish male, blue-eyed, 5ft 9in, single, happy personality. Many interests. Would like to share my life with one very special lady. All letters answered. Box No. 999

ENGLISHMAN, MID 40S, able-bodied. Interests: literature, cinema, arts. Seeks captivating disabled lady in her 30s or 40s with similar passions for friendship and more. London/SE area. Box No. 001

ASIAN MALE, 28. I have a minor deformity of the spine. I am educated to A level standard. I would like to meet a caring female of similar age for friendship. Interests include playing football and visiting the countryside. Box No. 002

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London SE16 2XU.
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Fax: 0171-237 8019

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FORD ESCORT CHAIRMAN wanted. Low mileage. Good condition. Reasonable price paid. Tel: (0410) 552646.

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A Gentle Lift Recliner chair (right) could be yours in time for Christmas.

At the touch of a button, you can raise yourself to a standing position or lower yourself to a fully reclined position.

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The chair has a strong solid hardwood frame and the winner can choose from five soft dralon colours or vinyl.

Try your luck and you could have a very comfy Christmas.



To enter, just fill in the form below and return it to: FREEPOST Keep Able, Fleming Close, Park Farm, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3BR. Closing date: 25 November 1996.

Offers not open to DN staff or associates.

Please enter my name in your free armchair prize draw and send me details of Keep Able products

Name _____

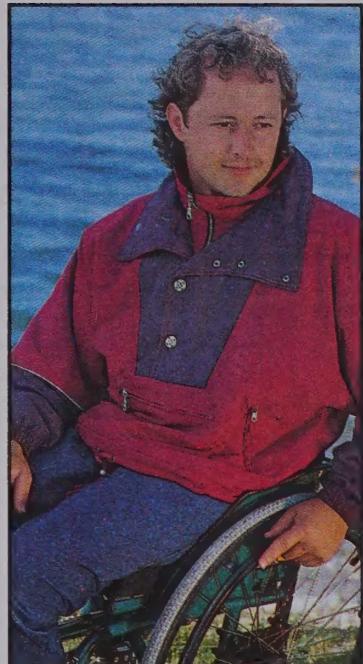
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KEEPABLE
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Winter coats special offer



We've got two of these unisex pull-on blousons from mail order company Rolli Moden to give away. They are worth £167 each.

Stylish clothes from the high street can be uncomfortable if you have to sit for a long time. Rolli Moden specialise in fashion for wheelchair users that looks and feels good.

Rolli Moden's Barry Kaighin, a wheelchair user himself, explains the company's ethos: "I have no desire to wear jackets, trousers or jeans with yards of excess material on my lap, whilst at the same time doing a very good impression of a builder from behind!"

These water and windproof

thermal blousons are shorter at the front and sides to keep material away from chair wheels, but they are long enough at the back to keep you warm.

The material breathes so you stay warm without sweating and a detachable leg cover ensures that the worst of the rain is kept off your lap. The jackets come in aubergine or blue.

Closing date: 25 November '96.

To enter, fill in the form (right) and return it to: DN offer, Rolli Moden, Mill Lane, Eastray, Kent CT13 0QJ, tel: (01304) 620445.

Congratulations!

"How lovely!" said Lorna Tomlin from Boston, Lincs, when she found out she'd won an Astor Bannerman desk in our competition (DN September). The desk will come in handy — Lorna has four children, including Fraser, aged six, (above) who has autism.



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How the new regulations will affect you

■ City focus: London

What does England's capital offer people with disabilities?

■ Microtech News

from NaideX on the latest high-tech equipment to improve your life.

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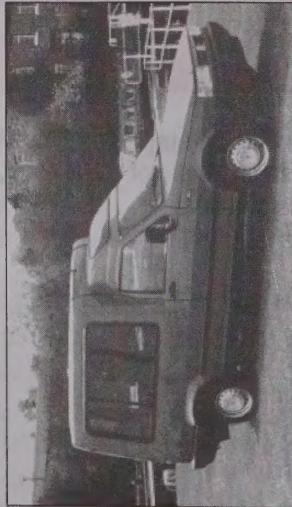
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Care home slammed

An inquiry following a young woman's death has unearthed bad practices in Yorkshire social services.



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